

**Towards Reconciliation: The White Saviour Trope in Canadian Newspaper coverage of
Grassy Narrows First Nation between 1977 and 2019**

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ABSTRACT

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Samantha Stevens

The white saviour trope that has been identified in films has yet to extend beyond the scope of cinematic inquiry. However, this trope does exist in Canadian news media as a vestige of colonial ideology passed down from the British empire. Since, reconciliation with First Nations people in Canada was one of the promises made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau when he was elected in 2015, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada finished its investigation into the impact of the residential school system the same year, addressing the white saviour in the news today is important. This thesis reveals the white saviour trope within news discourse through four major registers, privilege, guilt, savagery, and inferiority, in order to help journalists facilitate social change. By using Fairclough's three dimensional analytical framework, this thesis examines coverage of Grassy Narrows and the mercury contamination there in a case study spanning 1977 to 2019 in three of Canada's largest newspapers: the *Toronto Star*, *National Post*, and *Globe and Mail*.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Chapter 3: Methodology	37
Chapter 4: Research Findings.....	52
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	82
References	101
Appendix 1: Privilege: government and politicization	106
Appendix 2: Privilege: exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	112
Appendix 3: Privilege: speaking on behalf of and who benefits.....	113
Appendix 4: Savage: need to save	116
Appendix 5: Savage: combative	118
Appendix 6: Guilt: reactions and appeals to	120
Appendix 7: Inferior: backward or ignorant.....	124
Appendix 8: Multiple	126

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the last two decades, the Canadian government has taken significant steps towards open reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.¹ Examples of these steps forward have come mainly in the form of electoral promises, whether promises for increased funding, such as those seen in the latest announcements for housing, education, and water, or generalized abstract promises for reconciliation.² However, as with any change in the relationship between groups of people where one has been historically marginalized, it is important to consider the biases, world views, and agendas of all involved, especially, with regard to those who work in the media and the government. After all, what may be considered to be helpful and good intentioned by one group, may be interpreted as damaging and oppressive by another.

This is where Canadian society currently rests, on the precarious precipice of change. Some non-Indigenous Canadians have vowed to work towards mending a sometimes turbulent relationship with Indigenous people, a relationship that was initially forged during Canada's colonial era. But in light of these apparent movements forward, prudence calls for the consideration that perhaps the legacy of colonialism is still alive and well today. Thus, in this thesis, a possible vestige of this legacy, the white saviour trope, will be explored.

It can be argued that the current stage of societal flux began with the closure of the residential schools in 1996. The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2006, where former students of the residential schools sued the Government of Canada and

¹ In Canada, the term Indigenous includes those who identify as either First Nations, Inuit, or Metis. First Nations are Indigenous people in Canada with treaty rights, Inuit are the groups of people who live in the Northern areas of Canada who never signed treaties, and Metis are people who are the descents of French fur traders and First Nations. Within the First Nations and Inuit there are over 600 different nations, languages, and cultures. Some examples of these nations are the Ojibwe, Cree, Mohawk, Abenaki, Ungava, and Mi'kmaq.

² See. e.g. "Liberals promise \$638M for urban Indigenous housing," *CBC*, last modified February 20, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/liberals-urban-housing-homelessness-1.5026830>, and "Details lacking in federal budget, Indigenous leaders say," *CBC*, last modified March 20, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/indigenous-budget-2019-reaction-1.5064604>.

mainstream churches for the abuses that they endured during their time in these schools, pushed the Indigenous issues narrative forward.³ The outcome of this lawsuit was, in part, the creation of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada in 2008. With a primarily Indigenous commission that acted with the cooperation of the Canadian government, the TRC was tasked with acknowledging and releasing documents pertaining to the residential school system, including documenting the stories of individual survivors.

The findings from the commission forced the Canadian government and general public to acknowledge the racist policies and horrific histories that have plagued this country. Now, according to articles in newspapers like *Globe and Mail*, Canadians are reported to be optimistic and excited about working towards and creating an equitable future for all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.⁴ This is perhaps best seen in the adoption of the 94 recommendations, as prescribed by the TRC, by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and in the acknowledgments for action from the current prime minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Liberal government that he leads.⁵

Yet, there exists some skepticism about some of the steps and missteps taken towards this utopian end goal. Indigenous scholar Jeff Cornstassel argues that the TRC “allows political leaders and settler populations to deal with residual guilt,” and that it fails to fully address the concerns of the average Indigenous person.⁶ St’at’imc Elder Gerry Oleman says

³ “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” *Government of Canada*, date accessed July 27, 2018. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>.

⁴ Gloria Galloway, “Sympathy for aboriginals rising: Three-quarters of respondents in expansive new Canada-wide poll say they want to see social and economic disparities addressed,” *Globe and Mail*, last modified June 8, 2016.

⁵ See “Beyond 94: Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.” <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform-single/beyond-94?&cta=1>.

⁶ Jeff Cornstassel, “Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and community approaches to reconciliation.” *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 35, no. 1 (March 2009): 144. <http://www.cornstassel.net/IndigenousStorytelling%202009.pdf>

that the popular idea of reconciliation between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people put forth by the government and newspapers is actually misleading:

I think our people [Indigenous people] always have reconciled. Otherwise, we would have been terrorists. And we're waiting for the other side to do something for us, like we're saying, 'What did we do wrong?' 'Why do we have to reconcile?' Because reconcile means to repair a relationship, and it's natural for us to say, 'What did we do wrong?' Because we did not set up the reservation—we didn't ask for it. We did not set up the residential schools and we did not ask for it, because the reservations took us off the land. So it's difficult for us to say, 'We want to reconcile with you, Canada.' And Canada is saying yes, and is wanting there to be words. That's what makes it difficult for so many.⁷

Looking at the current trend in reconciliation in keeping with the TRC, especially in the ways it is portrayed in popular Canadian newspapers, other points of view such as Oleman's illuminate the often-overlooked aspect of current efforts.⁸ To some, the TRC and its recommendations now look more like another patriarchal system that aims to create more policies and roadmaps to ensure the continuity of the status quo, with the government setting the agenda, and Indigenous peoples going unheard, ignored, and ultimately paying the price.

There is no better example of this systemic inequality than the case of Grassy Narrows First Nation. On December 8, 1977, *Globe and Mail* published the first newspaper article

⁷ St'at'imc are an Interior Salish people located in the southern Coast Mountains and Fraser Canyon region of British Columbia; Elder Gerry Oleman, interview by UBC Faculty of Education, *Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education Course*, UBC IndEdu 200x, Jan. 20, 2015. <https://youtu.be/KIoDj2aEKPE>.

⁸ "Reconciliation" has become a contentious term as this thesis is being written, with some Indigenous and non-Indigenous journalists supporting the TRC use of the word and what it represents in terms of coming together. While, on the other hand, other Indigenous journalists insist that not enough is being done to create a balanced relationship, citing instances of under-representation in newsroom and avoidance of editorial discussions about genocide. See Jesse Wenté, "Jesse Wenté on the mainstream media's odious defence of genocide," *NowToronto.com*, last modified June 26, 2019. <https://nowtoronto.com/news/jesse-wente-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-canada/>.

about reported cases of mercury contamination among the Indigenous people living along the English-Wabigoon River system in Northern Ontario.⁹ Now, forty-two years later, the fight still continues in a back and forth battle between the needs of the people of Grassy Narrows and the politicians who repeatedly promise solutions that somehow never materialize to the satisfaction of those affected. In the middle of the debate reside the well-intentioned researchers and journalists, individuals who seek to expose the injustice at Grassy Narrows. Unfortunately, as will be argued in this thesis, their efforts actually end up adding to the problem.

For Canadian newspapers and journalists, the danger in covering events like the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows lies in unknowingly perpetuating an antiquated subliminal notion, a notion that can be traced back to the colonial era. It postulates that it is only the government and the descendants of white Europeans in Canada who can decide what is best for Indigenous peoples. This tendency is perhaps best characterized as the “white saviour trope,” a trope that has entered popular awareness largely through film studies.

Matthew W. Hughey defines the white saviour trope in cinema as “the genre in which a white messianic character saves a lower-or working-class, usually urban or isolated, nonwhite character from a sad fate.”¹⁰ Regarding Indigenous people in Canada, it is a fitting trope that manifests itself (with a few adaptations) in Canadian print news media, especially during crises.

This thesis takes the position that the white saviour trope, when expressed in Canadian newspapers, manifests as:

⁹ The English-Wabigoon river system in northwestern Ontario is a massive waterway known for its sport fishing and consists of various lakes and rivers. Part of the system, Garden Lake, runs past Grassy Narrows.

¹⁰ Matthew W. Hughey, “The Saviour Trope and the Modern Meanings of Whiteness,” in *The White Saviour Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 1.

- 1) Part of an ideological discourse that can be traced to the British Imperial era when Indigenous peoples were depicted in literature, correspondence, and newspapers as savage and helpless;
- 2) A modernist discourse that circulates within registers in the coverage of Indigenous people; and
- 3) A form of “the common sense” of the dominant society that permits people to feel good while not really addressing the core concerns and issues of Indigenous people and communities, and acts in maintenance of an unequal power balance.

This study focuses on how the written language journalists use has encouraged and allowed an idea, that of the white saviour, to persist into modern discourse. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer three questions:

- 1) How has the historic use of the white saviour trope embedded itself as a more-or-less routinized, almost subliminal set of received values that stand in as a generally unstated ideology in news media accounts of Indigenous people, usually during times of crisis?
- 2) How does the trope appear today in the newspaper coverage of Grassy Narrows as a residual imperial discourse?
- 3) And, in the case of Grassy Narrows, how has the trope been politicized in coverage to create the appearance of *doing something*?

This thesis is grounded in research on the imperial archive as theorized by Thomas Richards, a former associate professor of English and American Literature at Harvard, to reveal evidence of the trope in the historical record.¹¹ It examines current conditions using a case study and a critical discourse analysis to situate the trope and its use. It seeks to expose

¹¹ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, (London: Verso, 1993).

and interrogate the white saviour trope as it appears in the ideals of the dominant social formation, and examines how it is disseminated from centre to periphery through newspaper accounts.

It is important to identify and study the white saviour trope in journalism because it denotes an imbalance within Canada at a critical juncture where communication and culture intersect, one that will make reconciliation with Indigenous people difficult unless rectified. Revealing the trope will aid in destabilizing the current “common sense” as it applies to ideological matters currently at work in Indigenous/Settler relations.

As Norman Fairclough writes in *Language and Power*, “ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible.”¹² He argues that common sense, in the Gramscian understanding of the term, is a product of these subsumed ideological forces of control derived through the process of naturalization and works “in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power.”¹³ This common sense, or generalized sensibility, acts to “deflect attention away from a [or any] possibility that power relations [would be] questioned and challenged—that there are social causes, and social remedies, for social problems.”¹⁴ The difficult part is that the common sense works on an implicit assumption held by the dominant group that has yet to be challenged and brought to the forefront of societal awareness.

The way this changes, how a common sense is brought to the forefront of awareness, says Fairclough, is through social struggle.¹⁵ Recently in Canada we as a nation have watched large protests such as “Idle No More” enter the national consciousness. There were also Indigenous awareness protests during Canada’s sesquicentennial celebrations. The 2017

¹² Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power: Third Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 108.

¹³ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971); and Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power: Third Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 106-108.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 108.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 70.

Canada Day protest on Parliament Hill, when protestors built a teepee at the Human Rights Monument to protest the treatment of Indigenous people under the patriarchy of colonization, further brought Indigenous issues into the forefront of awareness.¹⁶ This newly awakened or reinvigorated awareness was primarily made possible through news reporting on these events.

However, running in parallel with coverage of the protests, specifically the coverage of “Idle No More,” were journalistic examinations of the living conditions on remote Northern Ontario reserves. These stories usually came about in the wake of emergency declarations. Remote communities like Attawapiskat, a Cree community on the shores of James Bay, and Pikangikum, a Ojibwe community more than 500 km northwest of Thunder Bay, have been repeatedly in the news over issues of substandard housing, lack of clean drinking water, and mental health emergencies. The stories about these crises deploy a different type of narrative, one that moves away from straight-up factual reporting, or the conflict driven story. Such stories are often told because someone of significance—a politician, for example—is visiting or has recently visited the community and has noted that there is something happening that would not be tolerated in the more populated south.

For example, in the days following the Red Cross’s intervention at Attawapiskat, and of politicians and reporters flying into Attawapiskat during the 2011 housing/water crisis, many of the news stories in major Canadian newspapers focused on the children in the community: the conditions they were living in, and on the need for a proper education that would give them a prosperous future. Often when the children were the focal point of a story they were depicted using metaphors, using their physical habits to illustrate the savage and harsh environment they live in—such as being huddled around a portable heater or eating without utensils to illustrate their lack of basic needs in a desolate and largely unfamiliar

¹⁶ Lauren Malyk, “Indigenous protesters in Ottawa erect teepee on Parliament Hill to counter Canada 150 celebrations,” *Ottawa Citizen*, last modified June 29, 2017. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/indigenous-protesters-in-ottawa-erect-teepee-on-parliament-hill-to-counter-canada-150-celebrations>.

landscape—a practice that has been documented in coverage of Third World countries where physical descriptions of the “Other” act as a metaphor for poor living conditions, starvation, and, even, death.¹⁷

This thesis takes the position that this practice stems from the colonial era when foreign and newly encountered people were depicted in various forms of written descriptions through the use of metaphorical language in an almost scientific analysis intended to make the reading public familiar with exotic locales and people. The result was often an objectification of the people being scrutinized, as if they were a commodity that was being weighed, measured, and prepared for export. An example of this can be found in Henry Morton Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa, Vol. 1; or, The quest, rescue and retreat of Emin, governor of Equatoria*:

At this settlement I saw the first specimen of the tribe of dwarfs who were said to be thickly scattered north of the Ituri, from the Ngaiyu eastward. She measured thirty-three inches in height, and was a perfectly formed young woman of about seventeen, of a glistening and smooth sleekness of body. Her figure was that of a miniature coloured lady, not wanting in a certain grace, and her face was very prepossessing. Her complexion was that of a quadroon, or of the colour of yellow ivory. Her eyes were magnificent, but absurdly large for such a small creature [...].¹⁸

The effect of describing newly encountered people in such a way led to the creation of an otherness of those who are not white and European. In essence, they were treated as subjects

¹⁷ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, (Durnham: Duke University Press, 1993), 22-27.

¹⁸ Henry Morton Stanley, *In Darkest Africa, Vol. 1; or, The quest, rescue and retreat of Emin, governor of Equatoria*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/43654/43654-h/43654-h.htm>.

and objects deserving of study and scrutiny instead of being regarded simply as human beings.

In contemporary times, the coverage of Attawapiskat reveals that most of the suggestions for education were on teaching community members how to build their own homes, ones suitable for the climate, and how to do the upkeep themselves. Op. ed. contributions focused on the need to educate people, create jobs, and create a sense of pride in their homes, the kind of pride often associated with contemporary home ownership. This was also a popular solution offered in editorials and columns. In some cases a cure to the supposed idleness of the people was offered since, as *Sun Media*'s Lorne Gunter remarked in a fashion that would not be out of place in Dickensian England, "idleness is the fountainhead of all sorts of ills."¹⁹ Home ownership, and the economic advantages of it, were offered as a solution in several news articles, either by politicians or private citizens who were not residents of the community. Considering that in 2015, the average income in Attawapiskat was \$24,657, compared to the Ontario 2015 average of \$47,915, it seems absurd that comparatively wealthy middle-class people in southern Ontario were lecturing people on a remote reserve about home ownership.²⁰

This is, of course, all said without getting into the whole discussion about how houses are acquired on reserves in the first place: whether funding is facilitated through private bank mortgages or loans from the bands themselves, or if lots are allocated upon application or

¹⁹ Lorne Gunter, "Political correctness caused Attawapiskat," *National Post*, last modified December 02, 2011.

²⁰ "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Attawapiskat 91A, Indian reserve [Census subdivision], Ontario and Ontario [Province]," *Statistics Canada*, last modified February 28, 2019, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3560051&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=Attawapiskat%2091A&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=3560051&TABID=1>; Erica Alini, "Are you earning a middle-class income? Here's what it takes in Canada, based on where you live," *Global News*, last modified November 6, 2017, <https://globalnews.ca/news/3828447/canada-middle-class-income-inequality/>.

only after community members are placed on housing-lottery waitlists.²¹ In essence, the discussion in the newspapers about housing in Attawapiskat was largely removed from the reality of housing acquisition within the community itself, and therefore did not get to the heart of the problem.

Indeed, newspaper stories like those that comment on reserve resources such as housing reflect an older ideology, one that focused on the patriarchal control and domination of Indigenous people. This is especially true since many of the articles, containing quotes from politicians, carried connotations of a “save the poor Indian” attitude, with suggestions of creating policies, charities, and systems to save the people from themselves and the environment they live in. These well-intentioned efforts carry with them echoes from the imperial era, remnants of the “white man’s burden,” a motif that appeared in the works of authors such as Rudyard Kipling and Nicolas Flood Davin, the latter being one of the men credited with the creation of Canada’s residential school system.

Furthermore, stories about donations to remote Indigenous communities are also frequent during these times, times when a “crisis” in the community, involving clean water, housing, or suicide, enters the daily news cycle. Stories about affluent Canadians of European-descent donating superfluous material goods to those living in the community, and/or money to organizations from wealthy urban centres who are transporting those goods, become a staple register embedded in the ongoing coverage.

Yet these donation stories, and those focused on visiting politicians, refrain from commenting on or even addressing the real issues at hand. Issues such as the high price of

²¹ Often how housing allocation on a reserve depends on the treaty they are under, the dissemination of budgetary funds from the federal government, and the sovereign operations of the bands themselves. It is also worth noting that the funds received from the federal government are often from trusts set up according to the specific treaties and the money in those trusts are often the result of the sale of the natural resources extracted on treaty lands. This knowledge has been gathered from several conversations the author has had with people who work in Indigenous community band offices.

goods and materials in the North, the reasons for the lack of clean drinking water or water facilities, the lack of heating in the houses, the lack of suitable and sustainable housing, the lack of mental health services, the lack of healthy food choices, and a long list of other concerns are depicted as tertiary concerns set aside for someone else to deal with. Even the problems with the reserve system itself are avoided.

If news reports did address these issues they were often without depth or follow up. It can certainly be argued that this kind of shallow coverage underscores the status quo in Canada, with Indigenous peoples continuing to be subjected to what those in power determine they need and how those needs will be fulfilled. Essentially, the reflex to comment and act without in-depth knowledge of Indigenous realities is symptomatic of the white saviour, a blend of white privilege and white guilt, and comes from the cultivation of a perceived superiority that stems in Canada from the British colonial era. It can also be argued that there is a peculiarly Canadian “common sense” at play here, a vestige of an antiquated ideology that non-Europeans are in need of saving, and that it is up to the white people to do the saving.

It’s worth pointing out how much the *idea* of the white saviour has permeated our culture and society at large, the extent to which it has become embedded as a trope. While this thesis takes the position that the white saviour trope is a remnant from the imperial mindset of the past, it also acknowledges that the trope has existed unchallenged and has only really gained recognition within the last decade. Most recently it has been mobilized in support of a critique of “voluntourism” in developing countries, the popular term for volunteer tourism, a now booming industry where primarily white people from wealthy Western countries travel to less developed countries, mainly in Africa, East Asia, and the Caribbean, and work in

hospitals, orphanages, and home construction.²² Evidence of the white saviour arises when these volunteers share photos of themselves surrounded by locals on social media with the idea that the people's suffering will gain the volunteer greater virtue among followers on social media sites such as Instagram. The issues concerning this manifestation of the white saviour have even appeared in a 2015 Huffington Post blog post that condemned the practice of journalists who, in 2013, insisted that Central American migrants show more suffering while being filmed, a practice that allowed the journalists in question to use their privileged position to exploit these people and sensationalize the truth.²³

Even I have fallen prey to the influence of the white saviour mindset. Not only do I sponsor a fifteen year old boy in Ethiopia named Yared through Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC), and have done so for the past ten years, but I have also participated in activities that could be considered voluntourism. In the early 2000s, during the first few years of my career as a sonar operator in the Royal Canadian Navy, I had a port visit in the Bahamas while onboard HMCS Athabaskan.²⁴ I volunteered to help paint the exterior of a local orphanage with some of my fellow sailors. During the few hours we spent there, the children were kept away from us and no one other than the organizer, an officer from our ship, had any meaningful interaction with the staff at the orphanage. When the painting was done, the officer posed with one of the children for a public relations picture, and that was that. We carried on with our port visit. My peers and I felt good about our actions, believing that we had somehow helped these children.

²² Tiger Sun, "Voluntourism: A truly noble effort or the Western savior complex?," *The Stanford Daily*, last modified April 25, 2018. <https://www.stanforddaily.com/2018/04/25/voluntourism-a-truly-noble-effort-or-white-saviour-complex/>.

²³ David R. K. Adler, "A Journalist's Guide to the White Savior Complex," *Huffington Post*, last modified December 6, 2017. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-r-k-adler/a-journalists-guide-to-the-white-savior-complex_b_7224716.html.

²⁴ I am not sure of the exact date as I was sailing many trips back to back during the first few years of my naval career which began in 2003, and dates were not of much importance at that time.

But years later, I can't help but ask myself, what did we really do? I still give money at Christmas to the Salvation Army, will happily donate money to almost any humanitarian and health organization that asks, give spare change to the homeless on the street, and still give monthly donations to the Nipissing First Nations' Food Bank. But to what end? I feel good and I like to believe that my actions make me a good person. Do they really though? By whose definition would my actions make me a good person?

This act of introspection and the resulting reflexivity hasn't been taken lightly. Attitudes, actions based on those attitudes, and deeply held beliefs come from somewhere and do not develop overnight. Acting out of perceived charity and goodness is a reflex, a socially reinforced action that has become part of me, but it also speaks to a general attitude of superiority.

I grew up reading Rudyard Kipling, Charles Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, C.S. Lewis, and other Victorian-era authors. Some of my favourite movies were *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Stargate*, *Zulu*, and *The Man Who Would Be King*. The imperial ideology was very much alive in my family, my education, and my home. My father immigrated to Canada from England in 1974, and imported some of this older ideology with him. This older ideology was perhaps best expressed in a sometimes negative and stereotypical attitude towards Indigenous people, much of which was derived from and influenced by films and the news. It was very much a socially reinforced belief system that found its way to me and acted through me because I didn't challenge it, primarily out of ignorance.

This brings us to the purpose of this thesis. If journalists unknowingly use this trope, then revealing how it operates in the production of journalism will encourage journalists to consider how their use of language contributes to the persistence of the white saviour trope and its ability to undermine meaningful change. From this, professional journalists are tasked with becoming part of the movement toward positive change in Indigenous communities, to

contribute to a viable solution to the dissolution of unequal power relations in Canada which manifests through the trope.

Discussions about the white saviour are rare, and it is difficult to think counter intuitively to a dominant ideal in every facet that it is manifested. In journalism, acknowledging the white saviour is even rarer, and, to my knowledge, the white saviour trope has never been applied as a means to study journalism itself. As guardians of democracy and as those tasked with ensuring that those who hold power are kept accountable, journalists who acknowledge the influence of the trope can be instrumental in correcting the power imbalance that is being maintained in Canada. This is especially important given the societal and political climate of post-sesquicentennial Canada.

The following chapter will examine how the trope emerged from and was then exported to Canada through British Victorian-era colonial administration, exploration, and literature. From this foundation, the thesis explores how the trope then wound its way into Canadian policy decisions and how, through subsequent, generational news reportage became deeply embedded in Canadian journalistic practices with respect to the larger Indigenous community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents the related scholarship and historical references that explain the evolution of the white saviour trope and how an imperial attitude came to be integrated into Canadian newspapers. It also includes quotes from interviews with people who live and work in Indigenous communities who chose to share their views on Canadian journalists, Canadian newspapers, and the white saviour trope.

As mentioned in chapter one, the white saviour trope comes largely from the realm of film studies. In *The White Saviour Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption*, Matthew W. Hughey defines and explains the white saviour as it appears in films, largely through a critique of the 2009 film *The Blind Side*, directed by John Lee Hancock. At the core of *The Blind Side* is a fairly simple story of a white Christian woman who devotes herself to “saving” a homeless African-American teenager and, eventually, guiding him to a career in the National Football League.²⁵

Based on the relationship between the film’s protagonists, Hughey defines the “white saviour” as “the genre in which a white messianic character saves a lower- or working-class, usually urban or isolated, nonwhite character from a sad fate.”²⁶ For Hughey, this is problematic because it identifies non-white people as helpless and in need of redemption, while white people are depicted as redeemers with “superior moral and mental abilities.”²⁷

To further illustrate the appearance of the white saviour trope in modern society, Hughey uses an excerpt from a *New York Times* article written by journalist Nicholas Kristof. Kristof admits to focusing on the work of an American aid worker in a developing country, instead of drawing attention to locals who are doing well and thriving:

²⁵ Matthew W. Hughey, “The Saviour Trope and the Modern Meanings of Whiteness,” in *The White Saviour Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014), 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 2.

Very often I do go to developing countries where local people are doing extraordinary work, and instead I tend to focus on some foreigner, often some American, who's doing something there...[the problem] in trying to get readers to care about something like Eastern Congo, is that frankly, the moment a reader sees that I'm writing about Central Africa...that's the moment to turn the page. It's very hard to get people to care about distant crises like that. One way of getting people to read at least a few [paragraphs] in is to have some kind of a foreign protagonist, some American who they can identify with as a bridge character.²⁸

This tendency for Kristof to focus on an American instead of telling the story through local eyes denotes a prevalent embedded attitude in an imperialistic culture, a patriarchal and biased attitude that favours the supposed civilized person over the perceived uncivilized person.

Literary scholar David Spurr mentions that there is a tendency to idealize those who are non-white and non-European, and that this tendency "is invariably produced by a rhetorical situation in which the writer takes an ethical position in regard to his or her own culture."²⁹ Favouring the American viewpoint in lieu of that of the natives', which Kristof admits to, is an example of this propensity of favouring information given by someone we are familiar with, someone from our own culture. This in turn leads to a belief that in some way that information is more valid. Unfortunately, a by-product of this practice is that those in Western countries who read such an article may be inclined to form a skewed belief about the nature of the American aid-worker as a person and about the purpose of their work. That is, after repeated exposure to such skewed information, readers come to believe that such

²⁸ Ibid, 3.

²⁹ David Spurr, "Idealization," in *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, (Durnham: Duke University Press, 1993), 125.

countries and the people in them are helpless without American or other Western intervention. From this we foster the idea that only Westerners know how to *fix* the problems of non-white and non-European people.

Indeed, Harold Innis argued that we must all be aware of the inherent difficulty “of assessing the quality of a culture of which we are not a part.”³⁰ Ethnocentrism is something that raises its head in all kinds of activities, but it is particularly evident and salient in written accounts and literary offerings, since it is “writings on culture [that] can be divided into those attempting to weaken other cultures and those attempting to strengthen their own.”³¹ This style of writing is a powerful tool, especially when a country is seeking to expand its empiric or global influence. Such a practice would almost certainly influence the “common sense” of how a dominant culture regards a dominated culture.

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci refers to common sense as “the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed.”³² This refers to a person knowing right from wrong, as is prescribed by the dominant power, and is reinforced socially often through adherence to some form of ideology. Common sense is the “‘folklore’ of philosophy,” meaning that while it is difficult for the individual to comprehend, it ensures that a person acts “in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is.”³³

Inspired by Gramsci’s work, Norman Fairclough writes that various “orders of discourse embody ideological assumptions, and these sustain and legitimize existing relations

³⁰ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 132.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

of power.”³⁴ As previously mentioned, Fairclough also maintains that the only way to change these assumptions is through “social struggle.”³⁵

Now while it can be argued that the US is no longer imperialistic; that is, the impetus to acquire and dominate new territory has waned since the early 20th century, this thesis takes the position that these antiquated attitudes actually persist to this day and are rooted in the British Imperial tradition, and that these attitudes take on their own resonance in the Canadian experience. Indeed, where Canada is concerned there is a direct connection to the Empire and the jingoistic literature it inspired.

In the Canadian context the white saviour is deeply associated with the remnants of an historical textual phenomenon: the imperial archive. The imperial archive as conceived by Thomas Richards, is described as “less a specific institution than an entire epistemological complex for representing a comprehensive knowledge within the domain of Empire.”³⁶ This concept of the imperial archive is clearly illustrated in Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden: The United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899.” The poem was originally intended for the US government as a call to take up the cause of imperialism in the same way that that the British had done. While the poem primarily calls on the US to dominate the inhabitants of their newly acquired possessions in Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, and the Philippines, with connotations of manifest destiny, there are four lines in Kipling’s poem that succinctly imply the imperial attitude towards indigenous peoples of other lands:

On fluttered folk and wild—

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,

Half devil and half child

³⁴ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power: Third Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 70.

³⁵ Ibid, 107-108, 113.

³⁶ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, (London: Verso, 1993), 14.

Take up the White Man's burden³⁷

This brief excerpt points to the designation of non-whites and Indigenous peoples to a status below that of colonizers of British and European descent. Kipling refers to non-European peoples as “new-caught, sullen peoples,” which virtually equates people as property rather than as equals.³⁸ Also referring to them as “half devil and half child” points to the imperial sense of salvation, of saving these people from their devilry and their childish innocence.³⁹ This is what Kipling refers to as “the White Man's burden.”

Spurr writes that “the poem serves as a model of the rhetoric of affirmation in its techniques of self-idealization and repetition.”⁴⁰ Affirmation is important because management of a vast empire consisting of colonies “must always reaffirm its value in the face of an engulfing nothingness.”⁴¹ At the height of the British empire such affirmation was best achieved through control of information, as control through militaristic means would have been logistically unmanageable over a long period of time, a mistake made by many previous empires (including the Spanish Empire from which America acquired its new possessions in 1899).

To fully understand the ideological mindset of committed imperialists such as Kipling, it is useful to mobilize a concept from John Hartley's work on journalism and modernity, and its relationship to the imperial archive.⁴² Hartley argues that journalism is a specific social and

³⁷ Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man's Burden: The United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899,” *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition*, (New York: Doubleday, 1929).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ David Spurr, “Affirmation,” in *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, (Durnham: Duke University Press, 1993), 113.

⁴¹ Ibid, 107.

⁴² Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire*, (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 1-8, quoted in John Hartley, “Chapter 1: Journalism and Modernity,” *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture*, (London: Oxford University Press Inc., 1996), 43.

historical textual system that acts as the “sense-making” engine of modernity, and only develops where “literacy, affluence, and social differentiation are highest.”⁴³

With respect to the British Empire, Hartley states that such sense-making was used to promote dominance through the control of information. But in order to have information to control, a vast archive of data had first to be compiled, everything from information about coffee production in Kenya, to the signing of land treaties on the Canadian Prairies, to assessments of tensions between Muslims and Hindus on the Indian subcontinent. This information—compiled, analyzed, and circulated—formed the statistical and ideological basis for a justification of dominance and the imposition of rules-based colonist culture based largely, as Hartley points out, on “a fantasy of control through knowledge.”⁴⁴ In fact, Innis states that “writing as a means of communication provides a system of administration of territory for the conquerors and in religion as system of continuity[...].”⁴⁵ James Carey also reminds us that even the first tasks of writing and printing were concerned with the matters and “the administration of nation and empire.”⁴⁶ The ability to print and distribute *en masse*, thanks largely to the Industrial Revolution with its steam powered printing presses and “rapid expansion of the printing industry,” only hastened the spread of information across the empire and aided in extending its reach.⁴⁷

This “fantasy of control” was based largely on literature celebrating the noble civilizing aspirations of modernist imperialism as reflected in the works of Kipling, Stanley, Wells, Wordsworth, and others. Viewed through the lens of the “fantasy of control” it is

⁴³ John Hartley, “Chapter 1: Journalism and Modernity,” *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture*, (London: Oxford University Press Inc., 1996), 33.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 44.

⁴⁵ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 75.

⁴⁶ James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 121.

⁴⁷ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 139.

relatively easy to see how messages about white, British cultural superiority could be distributed for consumption both at the centre (Britain) and to the farthest reaches of an empire on which the sun was said to never set.

Works distributed throughout the empire like Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* instilled the notion that Britain and the empire could go anywhere in the world, take control of a people, *save them* from their savage ways, and rule over them with impunity, even if only for a time.⁴⁸ The story is narrated by a British journalist working in India. The narrator relays the story of his encounter with Brother Peachey Carnehan and Brother Daniel Dravot, men, who in their past, were once "[s]oldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, and correspondents[...]."⁴⁹ While these two men are indeed rogues in their own right, these characters still are captivating because of their boldness and charisma, and, more importantly, they are portrayed as once inhabiting roles within the military and the information exchange, two institutions that were crucial to empiric expansion at that time. In fact, it is the skills that come from these various past occupations that embolden the two men to devise a scheme that would take them to "Kafiristan," a place in "the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan," where they can make themselves Kings.⁵⁰ They believe that "a man who knows how to drill men can always be a King," even if that means overthrowing a local leader and slaughtering countless locals who are the enemies of the tribe they set their sights on.⁵¹ Although their scheme leads to their eventual doom, the very idea that these characters believed that they could do such a thing – go into a foreign country and do as they wished because they were somehow superior – is symptomatic of the colonial ideology of control.

⁴⁸ Rudyard Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King and other stories*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994).

⁴⁹ Ibid, 47.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 48.

⁵¹ Ibid; The term drill in this sense refers to the military practice of commanding a large group of fighters through precise chosen movements and fighting styles, usually at the command of an appointed officer.

The ideas of salvation and charity are also important in considering work like Kipling's. While Kipling was born in India in 1865, he was educated in England and eventually immigrated to the United States, meaning that he was trained and grew up surrounded by imperial ideals, especially those ideals that were grounded in religious doctrine.⁵² Christians who left their homes to colonize and settle in other lands, leaving the country of their birth for whatever reason, carried with them a sense of a superior mission; that it was their task to help others they encountered, heathens and pagans, and to both raise these people to the colonizers' level of civilization and to save their souls.⁵³

There are passages in the Bible that discuss the principle of charity. According to Psalm 112:1-7 (New American Standard Bible) a person who is gracious, righteous, and charitable towards others will be rewarded. Deuteronomy 15:10 (NASB) mentions that those who are charitable will be rewarded for their work by God. It is worth noting that this particular passage specifically references charity towards slaves. From these examples, salvation, charity, and the notion of the burden is reinterpreted and repackaged as a noble undertaking.

In his book *Rethinking Generosity: Critical Theory and the Politics of Caritas*, activist and author professor Romand Coles explores how generosity was often at the core of the actions of Christian settlers:

Indeed, it is difficult to write of generosity today without conjuring up images of the terror wrought by a religion that at once placed the movement of *caritas* and

⁵² "Historic Figures: Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), *BBC*.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/kipling_rudyard.shtml

⁵³ Civilization in this sense is in reference to the Eurocentric idea of civilization, as settlers and conquerors were unaware at the time of reaching the New World that some Indigenous cultures also exhibited similar hallmarks of civilization: tribal governments, trade economies, and sustainable agriculture to name a few. This knowledge was shared by Patrick Stevens Sr., the author's father-in-law, of Nipissing First Nation near North Bay, Ontario.

agape, giving and love, at the foundation of being swept across the Americas during the Conquest with a holocaust of “generosity.”⁵⁴

Coles also notes that notions of “Christian receiving, giving, and proliferation” fail to account for the possibility of people who live and worship outside the realm of Christianity.⁵⁵

This should come as no surprise. Influential patriarchs of the Church such as Augustine, had written powerfully that to be outside of the Christian realm is to “tend toward nothingness” and, by extension, evil.⁵⁶ Thus, non-Christians were deemed to be “Others,” confined to an otherness that led to the conquest, assimilation, forced civilization and sometimes annihilation of entire cultures under the guise of a “moral righteousness and autonomy.”⁵⁷

However, the roots of the white saviour trope, and its expression in popular literature, were not just confined to the “high” imperial works of Kipling and his ilk. The famous exploits of Henry Morton Stanley, in documenting the expedition to rescue Dr. David Livingston from the perils of darkest Africa, can be interpreted as representing a different manifestation of the phenomenon, one where a white man is sent to discover the fate of another white man who is lost among the *savages*.

As a journalist, Stanley reported on his adventures in “a reportorial style.”⁵⁸ When Stanley embarked on his voyage in 1871, this was a relatively new style of newspaper writing that was more welcomed in the US than it was in Britain. One reason for this difference could be because at this particular time in Britain “the interest in literature which paralleled

⁵⁴ Romand Coles, *Rethinking Generosity: Critical theory and the politics of Caritas*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 2-3.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁸ Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five charismatic men and the conquest of Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 25.

suppression of newspapers checked the growth of literature in the colonies and compelled an emphasis on newspapers.”⁵⁹ It was also around this time that “[i]n the colonies books were imported on a large scale from England and Europe by booksellers and the colonial printer turned his attention to newspapers.”⁶⁰

Still, Stanley fed his stories back to the US and to Britain simultaneously. His reports emphasized “dangerous, suspenseful adventures, violent battles with ‘savage’ peoples, and the awe and mystery of uncharted, exotic terrain.”⁶¹ Despite the fact that these accounts were less welcomed in Britain, England’s *Daily Telegraph* saw the benefit of Stanley’s work: “‘The native tribes will be brought in contact with modern civilization, and it will not be long before that vast and well watered tableland will be reached by the enterprise and commerce of the white man.’”⁶²

While these are only two examples of works that made up the imperial archive, the full collection of texts from imperial authors captured and disseminated imperial ideals around the world, and those who were outside of those ideals were marked to be enlightened by the noble Englishman.

Hartley postulates that this method of control was a natural fit for journalism as it developed in tandem with imperial imperatives; that is, journalism informed those at the centre about what was going on abroad in the empire, and it informed colonial administrators about what was going on at the centre.⁶³ Journalism helped to import colonial ideas, gave those on the ground a justification for their actions, and connected journalists with the

⁵⁹ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 57.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 27.

⁶¹ Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five charismatic men and the conquest of Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 27.

⁶² *London Daily Telegraph*, 3 July 1872, quoted in Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five charismatic men and the conquest of Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 41.

⁶³ John Hartley, “Chapter 1: Journalism and Modernity,” *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture*, (London: Oxford University Press Inc., 1996), 47.

internalized sense that they were a part of the God-ordained civilizing mission.⁶⁴ Journalistic texts created a particular subjective reality, a flow of discourses based on an imperial ideology affirmed by those in power, and, in turn, became a natural part of the daily consumption of messages internalized by mass reading publics.⁶⁵

Similar methods were applied in Canada during the same era, notably in the decades leading up to the turn of the twentieth century when Western settlement developed into a nation-building project. The prime minister, John A. MacDonald, and an Irish journalist and politician, Nicolas Flood Davin, who settled in Canada in the mid 1800s, applied British methods to the colonization of the Canadian prairies. But at this time, the centre became Ottawa and the periphery stretched to each coast and as far north as was feasible at the time.

When MacDonald commissioned Davin in 1879 it was to determine if a system similar to the “industrial school system” in the United States would be suitable to adopt in Canada. “The Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds” was the result. Davin’s investigation and subsequent report are thought to be the greatest influences in the decision that led to the creation of the residential school system, a system that was only fully abolished in 1996.⁶⁶ The effects of the residential school system have now been well documented and are available to all Canadians due largely to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The system developed by Davin embraced the idea of *civilizing* the Indigenous peoples, which involved removing the children from their homes,

⁶⁴ Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five charismatic men and the conquest of Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 33.

⁶⁵ Ideology is referenced to as per Norman Fairclough’s definition in *Language and Power*: “Ideological power, the power to project one’s practices as universal and ‘common sense’, is a significant complement to economic and political power, and of particular significance here because it is exercised in discourse.” See Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power: Third Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 64.

⁶⁶ Union of Ontario Indians, *An Overview of the Indian Residential School System*, (Dayton: Creative Impressions, 2013), 6.

often forcefully, teaching them English, Christianity, agriculture (for the boys), and skills suited for domestic servitude (for the girls).⁶⁷

To the task of civilization, Davin's report also gives an insightful historical account of how the attitudes towards Indigenous people appeared in official Canadian discourses, attitudes that would eventually find their way into government policy. Phrases such as "the white man's way," "chronic querulousness," "catch them," and the general likening of the entire race as childlike and helpless point to the imperial perspective.⁶⁸ Davin's language also hints at a belief that he was somehow saving these people by making them civilized, a position supported by his reference to the missionaries who he called heroes for working with the Indigenous people.

It is obvious from the intermingling of religion and a tailored education that the European models of civilization were imposed on the Indigenous peoples in order for them to be considered worthy of becoming productive citizens of Canada. Through the report the need to civilize Indigenous peoples became an institutionalized ideal that worked its way into policy, and eventually into news media, in a way reflective of Hartley's "fantasy of control."

By the 1930s, newspaper accounts of interactions with Indigenous people further reflected this fantasy of control, and an obvious distinction between an inferiority trope and the need to save them was more salient, though the two often appeared together. For example, stretched between two news stories and a letter to the editor, the *Toronto Star* reports the case of Peter Bombard of Goulais Bay who was charged with killing partridge and beaver out of season.⁶⁹ In the first article, which appeared in the *Star* on May 10, 1930 with the headline

⁶⁷ Nicolas Flood Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds*, (Ottawa?:s.n., 1879), 1. <http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.03651/1?r=0&s=1>.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 8-12; Notice the echo of Kipling's poem in reference to "catching" the people.

⁶⁹ Goulais Bay is a First Nations reserve on the shore of Lake Superior and is one of the reserves under the Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways.

“Insists that God made partridges for poor Indians,” Bombard is quoted as saying that the partridge “was given to the poor Indian by God for his food” and that the government was wrong to accuse him of stealing.⁷⁰ On June 9 of that same year a report titled “Did the Indians surrender all?” in the *Toronto Star* made reference to Bombard’s case. This article was much more condescending. The author mentioned how all of Bombard’s legal costs were generously covered by the government, and argued that Bombard was making a claim that “the native race of Canada” was above the law in regard to hunting regulations.⁷¹ The author also stated that “[i]t was not the first time that a man of Peter Bombard’s race has talked hunting and fishing privileges to the continent’s conquerors.”⁷²

As explicit as the article was in its condescension towards Indigenous peoples, on June 20 a letter to the editor argued the opposite. The letter opens with “lo the poor Indian” and refers more to a moral right than a legal one that will allow Bombard to hunt as he pleases. The author of the letter pleads several times for the prosecution to act on sympathy towards “the poor Indian.”⁷³ While the authors of the letter and the news stories preceding it are unknown, they illustrate the imperialistic idea about a balance between dominance and salvation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. From these arguments, it is also evident that the authors are approaching the issues from a privileged position in which they can argue about what to do with Indigenous peoples without ever really getting to the heart of the matter, which in this case is hunting rights and accessibility to sustainable food sources.

The case of Peter Bombard opens the door to the assessment of journalism’s privileged position in the power relations between colonizers and the colonized. Key to the relationship is the notion of privileged observation, a fundamental element that Spurr argues

⁷⁰ Toronto Star archives. Union for Ontario Indians, Anishinabek Nation, North Bay.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

is crucial to a reporter's function as a witness of events.⁷⁴ Being an official witness denotes a sense of privilege, a sense of authority over what is being witnessed or observed, because the journalist is also excluded from their object by their very gaze.⁷⁵ When it is a person that is being gazed at in an assumed objective way by a journalist, then the person being observed is reduced to an object, to a less than inferior being. When applied in the colonial sense, as in the case of a journalist writing about an Indigenous person, that gaze is translated into a written piece that serves both as power and pleasure, information and aesthetics.⁷⁶ Descriptions of people and of their living conditions are written both implicitly and explicitly, in descriptive accounts that border on scientific observations, and in metaphors that aim to make the unfamiliar familiar.

In the examination of bodies, Spurr refers to classic colonial discourse in which the body is depicted as primitive and worthy of examination, especially the bodies of those who are considered different.⁷⁷ Stanley's depictions of indigenous people in Africa, for instance, is a prime example of how the primitive body is objectified, regarded and recorded only through Western aesthetic considerations. Spurr notes that in contemporary journalism, news accounts written about famine and death in countries such as India and Cambodia are still written from the perspective of these effects on the subjects' bodies.⁷⁸ Instead of the people being humanized and sensationalism eschewed, their bodies are instead used as metaphors for death, decay, and suffering.

The journalistic privileged observation is important in considering the relationship between a journalist and their subject. How a journalist chooses to speak to and about a subject

⁷⁴ David Spurr, "Surveillance: Under Western Eyes," in *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, (Durnham: Duke University Press, 1993), 13.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 15.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 22.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 24-25.

reflects a complex relationship between communication, culture, and power dynamics. The Chicago School of the late 1800s “characterized communication as the entire process whereby a culture is brought into existence, maintained in time, and sedimented into institutions.”⁷⁹ Behaviourism, a school of psychology founded by John B. Watson who happened to be acquainted with John Dewey of the Chicago School, rose to academic prominence during the Second World War.⁸⁰ While behaviourism was primarily interested in behavioural conditioning and reinforcement independent of the influence of a rational mind, it “gave rise to a power or domination model of communication in which study was narrowed into a focus on the means by which power and control are made effective through language, symbols, and media.”⁸¹

Because of the developments in communication technologies during that time, studies in communication expressed the idea that “ignorance is ended” because information could now move further and faster than it ever did before.⁸² Information and media could now reach more people than at any other time preceding this era. Fast communication on a global scale was a new reality, yet “[e]normous improvements in communication have made understanding more difficult. Even science, mathematics, and music [...] have come under the spell of mechanized vernacular.”⁸³ In other words, as communications technology grew to accommodate mass movement of information, it also meant that “[c]ommercialism [...] required the creation of new monopolies on language and new difficulties in understanding.”⁸⁴ With these new communication models in place, already established and

⁷⁹ James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 111.

⁸⁰ B.R. Hergenhahn, *An Introduction to the History of Psychology*, (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2009), 398.

⁸¹ James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 112.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸³ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 31.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

unchallenged belief systems that were reflected within the English language could continue to flourish, particularly ideas and beliefs associated with imperial ideology.

It was also during this time that Harold Innis formulated his concept of time and space. Innis found that within any imperial nation, whether French, British, or American, space and time determined how easily information flows from the centre to the periphery. Innis stated that:

The concepts of time and space reflect the significance of media to civilization.

Media which emphasize time are those which are durable in character such as parchment, clay, and stone. The heavy materials are suited to the development of architecture and sculpture. Media which emphasize space are apt to be less durable and light in character such as papyrus and paper. The latter are suited to wide areas in administration and trade.⁸⁵

As discussed earlier, the British Empire managed its commonwealth through a network of information, exerting a fantasy of control over the nations that were colonized. By printing books and newspapers, ideas and knowledge could now be shared anywhere that citizens of the empire roamed and settled.

As the empire grew, the records pertaining to all transactions, the body of literature sharing the dominant ideas from the centre and the institutions developed in the fashion of the centre, grew along with the expansion of the empire. But since this was all created under the ideal of the dominant white English culture, the resulting media was created with a biased approach to the rest of the world.

⁸⁵ Harold Adams Innis, *Empire and Communications*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950),

According to Innis, "any form of communication possesse[s] a bias," and that the nature of communication often "strengthen[s] collective memory and consciousness."⁸⁶ In other words, those who control the contents and means of communication, also control the ability to distribute specific ideals, concepts, and knowledge throughout a country or empire, mainly in this case of producing a space bias by relying on newspapers and books. Innis warns of this: "[t]he bias of modern civilization incidental to the newspaper [...] will presume a perspective in consideration of civilizations dominated by other media."⁸⁷ In other words, if we continue to construct our worldview and local knowledge based on newspapers and literature alone, as people during the British colonial era generally did, then we are bound to fail to recognize our current bias of communication and perspective. This is especially relevant if we consider that our attitudes towards other "civilizations dominated by other media," the Indigenous oral tradition, for example, will likely be skewed because of our reliance on news and newspapers for information about those people and their practices.⁸⁸

It is not enough for a bias to merely exist in the language of discourse used in newspapers: biases such as the white saviour, to be effective in the colonial impetus, must be embedded in a culture in such a way that its existence continues without awareness. This may explain why, according to Geneviève Couchie of Nipissing First Nation, journalists tend to depict Indigenous people differently: "I find that [journalists] seem to go more verbatim with quotes of Indigenous people," that print journalists in some cases include pauses like "um," repeated, and mispronounced words that make Indigenous Chiefs and council members seem uneducated.⁸⁹ On the other hand, such things are omitted from similar speeches given by town

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Harold Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, (The United States of America: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 34.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Geneviève Couchie (resident in Garden Village, Ontario), in discussion with the author, January 2019; she also wants it made clear that she is not Indigenous, but grew up in the town next to the reserve and is now married to a member of Nipissing First Nation.

mayors. She said that she finds in newspapers there is often a “lack of attention or care for even the small details” like doubling checking the location and name of a community.⁹⁰ As to misinformation and lack of proper education about Indigenous people in her area, Couchie says, “the media doesn’t help with that when there’s a fishery issue.”⁹¹ She adds that the media tends to focus on only the bad stories, never the success stories of Indigenous people in the area: “They have that [stereotypical] portrayal of an Indigenous person in their head.”⁹²

Couchie’s anecdotal experience points to a tendency for journalists to consciously or unconsciously portray Indigenous people differently, which speaks to a type of bias. The way Indigenous people are quoted, relying on stereotypes, and a lack of regard for double-checking spelling points to a generalized notion held within society. While this doesn’t point to the white saviour per se, it does demonstrate an indifference to the people being reported on, that they are somehow inferior and unworthy of the same care and attention afforded to non-Indigenous peoples.

If the white saviour trope has been incorporated into the common sense of the dominant culture, and journalism is responsible for both maintaining society in time and transmitting messages in space, it stands to reason that journalists are either unaware of the ideological undercurrents of the trope, or they have embraced the ideology itself. The latter is less likely as it would point to today’s journalists purposefully acting subjectively and knowingly promoting a personal racial bias with the aim of subordinating Indigenous peoples. It is more likely that journalists operate with a bias that they are unaware of, one that has been socially reinforced through environment and education, one that has been left largely

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid; In the areas surrounding Lake Nipissing there is considerable public debate about Indigenous and non-Indigenous fishing rights, especially in regard to disagreements between those who fish pickerel for profit and local sports-fishermen.

⁹² Ibid.

unchallenged, and is strong enough to influence their attitudes, and in turn is reflected unconsciously in their choice of language, story topics, and selection of quotes.

This is not to say that journalists avoid Indigenous issues and coverage, or that they are entirely insensitive to the issues. According to Philip Goulais of Nipissing First Nations the coverage of Indigenous people and communities has improved greatly over the years:

The stories I've read are fairly accurate and the upside for me is that the government likes to see themselves as doing the right thing, making announcements, [...] journalists are asking what's going on at X,Y, Z community? Why is it so bad? And they're asking the prime minister and the premiers and they say 'well we're going to go visit that community, and we'll bring some journalists with us,' and the first thing they'll announce [...] is money.⁹³

Goulais says that as some journalists follow up and see that nothing has changed, and concludes that "throwing money at something really wasn't the answer, it was the answer to get you past this day, and make it look like something is being done."⁹⁴ He adds that, "journalists keep the stories going and that's a good thing."⁹⁵ However, for Goulais and others it still comes down to how the stories are told, and this is based on how journalists work with and within the language they know.

As to the discussion about the white saviour, Goulais feels that actions and stories signalling a tendency to simultaneously depict Indigenous people as inferior and in need of saving does happen, and they tend to neglect the Indigenous side of things:

⁹³ Philip Goulais (Nipissing First Nations), in discussion with the author, January 2019.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

A lot of different people went to a lot of our First Nations communities, and said, ‘We’re non-native, and I have an idea that everybody should sit in this factory and make these little things and this will be good for the people. It will save your community.’ So the minute it’s expressed that way, presented that way, then you’ve lost your crowd as far as First Nations. So when you hear a story that talks about The Great White Father that negotiated treaties and that, most First Nations people will say, ‘I want to read that story.’⁹⁶

This really speaks to the patriarchal nature of colonization, of the tendency to dictate how others should live, while at the same time neglecting their point of view. Goulais adds that there is a danger in doing things this way and that the solution is really quite simple:

There were schools built in native communities, different things built, and they said, ‘This is for you, this is what you need, and now you’re all set.’ And those things failed. Whereas when people said, ‘what do you want to do,’ you start to have community consultations, and you hear what the Elders have to say, and you hear what people have to say, and if we’re going to talk about Elders, and if we’re going to talk about young people and what’s going to be good for them, then I was told years ago, ‘Then bring us into the room before you say what’s good for us.’⁹⁷

This inclusion of Indigenous voices is important for journalists who need to avoid perpetuating the trope, which, according to Goulais, primarily stems from the government wishing to portray action and change in regard to Indigenous issues.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

This is a central consideration that lies at the heart of the white saviour trope: the notion of appearing to affect meaningful change as opposed to actually making meaningful changes to the lives of real people with real concerns, and who have good ideas about how meaningful change might come about. Therefore, the concern that this thesis expresses with investigating the existence of the white saviour trope within newspaper discourses operates within the observed notion that the patriarchal imperial system continues to operate through vestiges of imperialism. This reality goes largely unchallenged because of the lack of awareness of the trope's societal and cultural permeation and long-term detrimental effects.

Steve Bonspiel, a Kanien'kéha:ka journalist and the editor of the *Eastern Door* newspaper in Kahnawake, Quebec says that “there’s an ignorance [...] even with journalists, [...] The inherent problem with the way journalists cover things here [in Kahnawake], is that they don’t come here often enough, they don’t spend the time here.”⁹⁸ He says there is often a fear, either a fear for safety or that no one will talk to them, and for those living in non-Indigenous communities that are near reserves, a general hesitancy to go into Indigenous communities: “Montreal is right here. Talk to Montrealers about Kahnawake and they’ll say, ‘Oh! Can you go there? You’re allowed to go there? You’re not going to get killed?’”⁹⁹ He argues “the stories here are the same as your stories, just a bit of a different history and context.”¹⁰⁰

Part of that history and context, or at least a jumping-off place for a discussion, may be reflected in periodical investigations and official interventions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and grass-roots protest movements such as “Idle No More.” Each in its way has brought Indigenous issues to the forefront of Canadian discourse. Yet, little apparent progress has actually been made in improving the lives of real people in

⁹⁸ Steve Bonspiel (The Eastern Door editor), in discussion with the author, October 2018.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

remote communities such as Attawapiskat, Pikangikum, and Grassy Narrows, communities that have come to national attention on a number of occasions because of issues arising from a range of concerns including water quality, substandard housing, and suicide epidemics. What's more, the narrative about Indigenous people may have seemingly improved in the newspapers in that overt racism is a thing of the past, but there remains a great deal of misinformation and fear. It is hoped that one outcome of this thesis will be to establish that real reconciliation will not happen unless Canadian journalism and journalists become aware of the white saviour trope and what it means for Indigenous Canadians.

The following chapter proposes a methodology wherein the white saviour trope can be both identified and unpacked from what is arguably one of the largest examples of injustice in Canada—the mercury contamination at Grassy Narrows First Nation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Using a critical discourse analysis in an examination of the explicit lexical and stylistic features of newspaper coverage of the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows First Nation, this study will contextualize the role of journalism in the formation and perpetuation of the white saviour trope. By focusing on the rhetorical aspect of the white saviour, this analysis supposes that the journalists working for Canadian newspapers are not using the trope maliciously or even consciously. Instead, this analysis suggests that the language used in relation to the commonly identified trope is actually a vestige of an ideology of control situated in the imperial archive, a now antiquated idea and belief system that remains at work in the greater context of Canadian government and culture.

For the purpose of this thesis, a case study of Grassy Narrows newspaper coverage and the related mercury contamination of the English-Wabigoon river system is suitable to reveal the white saviour trope. As a quintessential example of unbalanced power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, the case of Grassy Narrows reveals not only the privilege wielded by those in power, but also the combined guilt expressed through visiting politicians, propositions for further contamination studies, and the promises of solutions, whether financial, environmental, or medical. Since the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows affects the community's access to a sustainable food source, longterm health, and economic growth, the governmental management, or rather mismanagement, of the issue and the representation of the issue and government intervention by journalists reveals not only the trope itself, but also its politicization.

This critical discourse analysis is guided by a convergence of deconstruction and postcolonial theory, both of which come largely from the realm of literary criticism. Both theories and methods operate in a textual analysis that seeks to find a meaning within a text that challenges previously held notions, ideas, and world views.

The deconstruction of the texts used in this thesis first seeks to identify the binary operations in the Derridean sense “that Western metaphysics is based on a system of binary operations or conceptual oppositions,” and that these metaphysical assumptions have continued unchallenged “since the time of Plato.”¹⁰¹ These binary operations appear in associations such as good/evil, light/dark, male/female, civilized/savage, etc., with one element of the binary superior to the other. In the application of binary operations to this study, pairings such as civilized/savage, white/non-white, saving/condemning, domination/cooperation, and knowledge/ignorance, appear with frequency both in the historical context and in contemporary newspaper articles representing the sample under review.

An example that exemplifies the historical context to many of these pairings appears in the *Toronto Star* article “Sorcery flourishes within Ojibway tribe educationist states” from June 29, 1938.¹⁰² In the article, the journalist refers only to the work of J.F. Davidson from Upper Canada college in Toronto who claimed that a group of magical medicine men called the Midewiwin still exist and that “[c]ivilization has driven ... [this group] underground.”¹⁰³ The article refers to sorcery, mysticism, savagery, and even accuses one of these medicine men of casting a love charm on “an elderly Norwegian settler.”¹⁰⁴ This article is a poignant example of how the Ojibwe were depicted as savage and, to some extent, evil, then contrasted with the learned and civilized white man.

¹⁰¹ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 107-110.

¹⁰² The name of the Ojibwe people is spelled many different ways depending on the region and era and includes the spelling Ojibway. In this paper the spelling Ojibwe will be used.

¹⁰³ Interestingly, in the early contact periods between Indigenous people and French fur traders, the Nipissing Ojibwe were often regarded as skilled healers and sorcerers by the Huron and Iroquois people, and the rumours were noted by the traders when they were exploring the region, especially around the present day Mattawa, North Bay, and Nipissing regions. But it is believed by some that the Nipissing Ojibwe started these rumours themselves to dissuade attacks and invasions from their enemies the Iroquois. This knowledge was shared by the author’s father-in-law Patrick Stevens Sr.; Toronto Star archives. Union for Ontario Indians, Anishinabek Nation, North Bay.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

These binary operations will be examined for “the values, concepts, and ideas” that are associated with them.¹⁰⁵ Binary operations matter significantly in this thesis, because this work seeks to challenge the current status quo. It seeks to identify the relationship between the white saviour trope and the dominant ideology that is supported politically, socially, culturally, and societally in Canada in a perpetual and self-reinforcing relationship. Historically, as discussed in chapter two, evidence of this relationship is demonstrated by Davin’s report and its influence on Indigenous management policy, which then influenced media coverage of Indigenous people, and in turn influenced the ideas and attitudes of readers towards Indigenous people. This is seen primarily in letters to the editor and opinion pieces. In other words, this thesis aims to “dismantle [the] previously held worldviews” of those in power, a strategy associated with textual deconstruction.¹⁰⁶

A contemporary of Derrida’s work on binaries, postcolonialism, examines ““writing that sets out in one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives.””¹⁰⁷ Suited to this investigation is the postcolonial approach offered by Frantz Fanon. Inspired by the works of Karl Marx, Fanon’s work on postcolonialism primarily argued the need for overcoming the binary system, specifically a system where black is interpreted as evil and white is interpreted as good.¹⁰⁸ His passage in *The Wretched of the Earth* is particularly revealing about the nature of colonization, the subsequent living conditions, and resulting depictions of colonized peoples: “Beaten, undernourished, ill, terrified-but only up to a certain point-he has, whether he’s black, yellow, or white, always the same traits of character: he’s a sly-boots, a lazybones, and a thief, who lives on nothing, and who understands only violence.”¹⁰⁹ Since this

¹⁰⁵ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 118.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 202.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 204.

¹⁰⁹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 16.

investigation seeks to challenge the binary oppositions of common words in order to reveal hidden assumptions and deep-seated feelings of guilt Fanon's arguments are an important guide.

Edward Said's postcolonial arguments also offer important insights. Orientalism, according to Said, is a belief influenced by the stereotype that non-Europeans are immoral, savage, thoughtless, and lazy.¹¹⁰ Moreover, Said argued that colonization is guided by the idea that the colonized are not like the colonizers and deserve to be ruled.¹¹¹ Said recognized that colonialism was made possible and propelled by ideological forces that were reinforced through literature, administrative activities, and language.¹¹²

In light of these theorists and their arguments, it is worth noting that while this thesis draws on aspects of postcolonialism, it is not postcolonial *per se*. Postcolonial examinations of texts are typically only applied to works that exclude the viewpoints of colonizers and their descendants, and are more concerned with writings from the colonies themselves, often from the perspective of the Indigenous populations in those countries.¹¹³

However, it is the overarching aim of this thesis that the dominant culture in Canada, as one derived predominantly from British imperialism, should also strive to decolonize itself, not as a new way to exert a different kind of control and domination over Indigenous peoples, but as a way to grow alongside them, and to acknowledge that the dominant Eurocentric-derived worldview is not the only one that is of value.

This is a necessary process that has been promoted by some in the realm of Indigenous Studies. According to N. Martin Nakata et al., "non-Indigenous students are unable to work

¹¹⁰ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 204.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 205.

¹¹² Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 9.

¹¹³ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 200.

outside of dominant colonial modes of thinking without first having their own identities and histories disrupted.”¹¹⁴ To achieve this requires a great deal of introspection, reflexivity, and active critical thinking on the part of those who hold some form of dominant power and/or privilege. Such an activity forces those same people to ask themselves some difficult questions: what do I really know about Indigenous people in Canada? How are my actions or inactions affecting them? This is now widely accepted as a necessary factor in the processes of decolonization and can be extended to any non-Indigenous person who works with or is involved with Indigenous people whether on a personal or professional level.

This thesis seeks to identify the white saviour trope in newspapers, however it also argues, in a more abstract fashion, that the decolonizing of the self is a paramount exercise for any journalist who covers Indigenous issues or conducts scholarly work that deals with Indigenous representations. This necessarily involves an examination into the role of language in encouraging and permitting an embedded idea, that of the white saviour, to persist into modern discourse.

To uncover the more-or-less routinized use of the trope in newspaper accounts, the thesis mobilizes a case study using a sample of newspaper articles that cover the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows and deploys a critical discourse analysis of the lexical and rhetorical devices in those articles. This methodology, it is argued, is effective in revealing the values associated with the language used, especially when reporting is compared with an archive of newspaper accounts from the *Toronto Star* that has been collected and preserved by Indigenous sources.¹¹⁵ By cross-referencing archival and contemporary accounts and the evolution (or lack therein) of language used by Canadian journalists to describe Indigenous

¹¹⁴ N. Martin Nakata, Victoria Nakata, Sarah Keech, and Reuben Bolt, “Decolonial goals and pedagogies for Indigenous studies,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 134.

¹¹⁵ The archive was compiled by Les Couchi of Nipissing First Nation near North Bay, Ontario, and was purchased by the Union for Ontario Indians, Anishinabek Nation, North Bay.

issues, this thesis submits that the white saviour trope has wide currency in contemporary Canadian journalistic accounts.

To reveal this embedded discourse a comprehensive sample of 244 articles was obtained from three widely read Canadian newspapers on the topic of mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows. A longitudinal examination of *Globe and Mail*'s coverage of the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows begins with the first newspaper report in December 8, 1977 and is followed through until March 30, 2019. The *Toronto Star*'s coverage begins in May 23, 1985 and continues until April 2, 2019, although in the *Toronto Star* archive there was a brief mention of Grassy Narrows on May 4, 1973. However, given the brevity of the mention, this article was not included in the sample and was kept with the archive. Finally, the *National Post*'s coverage begins in April 27, 1999 and is followed until April 2, 2019.

By using three of the most widely read newspapers in Canada for this study, the methodological design sought to embrace a wide reach of information dissemination in the Canadian context. The design acknowledges that all three papers are situated in Toronto; however, it was determined that the national circulation numbers offset any latent bias in the Toronto-centric model. *Globe and Mail* has a circulation of 323,133, *Toronto Star* has a circulation of 308,881, and *National Post* has a circulation of 186,343.¹¹⁶ There are French newspapers in Canada with higher circulations than the *National Post*, but this study only includes English-Canadian newspapers because, as argued in this thesis, the trope is a historically based phenomenon with its roots primarily in the colonial development of the British Empire in North America.

Initial research into coverage of Grassy Narrows in these papers through the ProQuest database available on the website of Concordia University's library revealed 244 articles

¹¹⁶ Melissa Meyer, "Canada's Top 20 Daily Newspapers." *Cision*. <http://www.cision.ca/trends/canadas-top-20-daily-newspapers/>.

pertaining to Grassy Narrows: *Globe and Mail* with 74, *Toronto Star* with 156, and *National Post* with 14. A search for news articles in these papers pertaining to Grassy Narrows did not specify any journalistic categories in order to identify the full reach of coverage on this topic.

It is worth noting that during the timeframe under examination, the grassroots “Idle No More” movement and the housing crisis interventions at Attawapiskat became the focus for coverage during the later part of 2011 until later in 2012.¹¹⁷ During this time, coverage of Grassy Narrows ceased almost completely. This shift in coverage began in the latter half of 2011, when the coverage of Attawapiskat peaked and then continued for several months until November 2012, which was when “Idle No More” officially formed as a protest against Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Bill C-45.¹¹⁸ It was at this time that the narrative shifted to an even more politicized focus on Indigenous issues, often referring to one political party as more or less competent than another in relation to how it handled Indigenous issues. This coverage continued well into 2013.

The critical discourse analysis used in this research is derived from the work of Norman Fairclough. In Fairclough’s analytic approach, qualitative analysis operates from a transcendent perspective, an approach in which the “goal is to remove false beliefs held by those being studied.”¹¹⁹ This approach is typically used in “questions about power or inequality.”¹²⁰ This methodology is in line with the end goal of this thesis, that is to spark

¹¹⁷ As mentioned before, the housing crisis at Attawapiskat came to national attention beginning in November 2011 through news reports on the lack of suitable housing, heating, and drinking water, among other concerns. In line with this coverage came the former-chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike in Ottawa to protest the living conditions in the community and to support the grassroots “Idle No More” movement.

¹¹⁸ Central to the controversy surrounding Bill C-45, also known as the Jobs and Growth Act, was the amendment to the Indian Act, in which the federal government reduced the band-wide voting stipulations on the leasing of First Nations land. This was done without prior consent of the First Nations, which contravenes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, failing to recognize the self-determining power of the First Nations. The Idle No More protests were primarily about refuting the bill and protecting the First Nations’ right to self-determination.

¹¹⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 330.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

social change and “to transcend current social conditions” through the identification of a remanent of a colonial system.¹²¹

The critical discourse analysis used in this case goes beyond simply noting the occurrences of common registers and topics in a text. With this type of analysis, this study seeks to identify and understand “the effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies” in relation to the white saviour.¹²² To this end, Fairclough’s three dimensional analytical framework is best suited, since its use facilitates the analysis of text in three ways: the textual, the interpersonal, and the societal.¹²³

The first step involves the textual analysis of the sample. In this study, the textual analysis will primarily focus on the vocabulary in a fashion as identified by Fairclough.¹²⁴ Common phrases that are repeated throughout the sample were assessed according to their experiential values; notably, how a text’s producer reveals their knowledge or beliefs through their representations of the natural or social world.¹²⁵ Experiential values will be evaluated according to “ideologically significant meaning relations.”¹²⁶ Doing so will allow us to explore how the authors confront their privilege (whether as journalists or as a non-Indigenous citizens) and guilt when writing about Indigenous people.

For example, a primary scan of the material revealed that the word “help” appeared 167 times in the sample. The word often appeared alongside proposed solutions to cleaning up the mercury, improving the living conditions in Grassy Narrows, or reaching a financial settlement between the band, the province, and the companies involved in the contamination. Consider, for instance, the article “Mercury’s victims” published in *Globe and Mail* on

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 9.

¹²³ Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse*, (London: Arnold, 1995), 57.

¹²⁴ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power: Third Edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), 129.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 130.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

November 27, 1985. The lede creates the belief that not only is something being done about the mercury contamination, but also that this one action will *help* solve other problems in the community:

It has been a long, hard road for the Indians living on Ontario's Grassy Narrows and Whitedog reserves. But finally, 15 years after mercury was found contaminating the English-Wabigoon river system, the bands have reached a turning point: a proposed settlement of \$16.667-million to help them escape a tragic cycle of depression, alcoholism and violence.¹²⁷

It is also written within the article that “money alone will not solve the Indians' problems.”¹²⁸ However, framing the issue of mercury contamination as being the cause of depression, alcoholism, and violence within the community essentially allows those in power to wash their hands of the issues by appearing to solve them with an unrelated money settlement. In fact, the problems may have been caused by other factors such as the patriarchal Indian Act or the reserve system itself, both of which are designed to hinder Indigenous self-determination and autonomy.

The tendency of the government and the powerful to act in order to alleviate any sense of guilt and mitigate the need for further in-depth involvement is important. Admission to guilt and complicity in acts of domination, even passive non-actions, is something that would create a type of cognitive dissonance wherein a person seeks “information that justifies their attitudes, behaviours, or decisions, [in order to] ... decrease the dissonance felt. By avoiding inconsistent information, the individual avoids triggering dissonance or increasing its

¹²⁷ “Mercury’s victims,” *Globe and Mail*, last modified 27 November, 1985.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

magnitude.”¹²⁹ For instance, individuals will often act defensively about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours when challenged, and they will also form a type of information bias even in light of contrary evidence.¹³⁰ In the example presented, cognitive dissonance is alleviated by attributing all of the problems faced by Grassy Narrows to one major issue, the mercury contamination, to which the government and powerful are offering a solution through compensation for past harms.

But, if we consider deconstruction as an application and replace the word “help” with its binary opposite, “hinder,” issues of power emerge. The settlement money was offered by the federal government, the Ontario provincial government, and the two paper companies accused of polluting the water, Great Lakes Forest Products Ltd. and Reed Inc. If the band were to refuse the settlement money, and the living conditions on the reserve did not improve, then it would give licence for those in power to insist that they had tried to help but that the people were hindering themselves. In this way, any other factors that could have contributed to depression, alcoholism, and violence are effectively silenced, and those in power would have alleviated any dissonance felt in relation to feelings of guilt simply because they could maintain that they had tried to help the people of Grassy Narrows.¹³¹

Treating each common phrase from the sample in this fashion, by identifying its experiential value and then unpacking the phrase’s meaning using lexical and rhetorical devices, and then by contrasting the keywords within the phrase with their binary opposites, we can begin to understand not only the prevalence of elements of the white saviour trope, but

¹²⁹ Brigitte Bardin, Pauline Vidal, Léo Facca, Rafaele Dumas, and Stéphane Perrissol. “The Effect of Information Quality Evaluation on Selective Exposure in Informational Cognitive Dissonance: The Role of Information Novelty.” *International Review of Social Psychology* 31, no 1 (2018): 1. doi:10.5334/irsp.173.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Silences, in this case, are in reference to Carol Bacchi’s WPR method which postulates that how a problem is represented effectively leaves out other contributing or related problems or issues, which through problem representation become silenced. See Angelique Bletsas and Chris Beasley, eds., *Engaging with Carol Bacchi Strategic Interventions and Exchanges*, (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2012).

how it has been woven into an unstated and concealed ideology that is repeated time and time again in newspaper articles. This leads to the second level of analysis.

The methodology takes the position that it is possible to reveal a second level of analysis, the interpersonal, by examining the discursive qualities of the white saviour trope through intertextuality. As the above example suggests, the associative meaning of “help” in relation to the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows is powerful and occurs frequently throughout the sample. Its frequency and relation to proposed solutions is a prime example of the intertextuality of words and phrases that can be associated with the white saviour trope.

Intertextuality, as described by Julia Kristeva is extremely useful when adapted to tackle the subjective responses of journalists, editors, and readers who appear to default unconsciously to the narrative habits of the white saviour when they consume, produce, and reproduce articles about Indigenous people. The repetition of specific words, phrases, and ideas demonstrate how often newspapers, authors, politicians, and institutions are constantly influenced by each other, and that “the text is not an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality.”¹³² According to Kristeva's theories, “[i]f texts are made up of bits and pieces of the social text, then the on-going ideological struggles and tensions which characterize language and discourse in society will continue to reverberate in the text itself.”¹³³ In other words, texts are a reflection of a society, both its past workings and present struggles.

As the previous example demonstrates, there are common words of importance that are used consistently in newspapers. Intertextual analysis reveals the plurality of the discursive lexical and rhetorical devices associated with the idea of the white saviour, lending

¹³² Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.

¹³³ Ibid.

support to the hypothesis that the trope is an outdated idea supporting a set of embedded practices that Canadian society struggles with on many levels.

For example, in the sample, the frequency of the word “help” in association with solutions to the problems faced by Grassy Narrows would suggest that attempts are being made to *help* resolve an issue or problem. The word itself creates a sense of amicability, of one well-intentioned group helping another. Helping, as a basic human value, is important in advancing relations between groups. But when one group has been historically dominated, offering help can be viewed as a patriarchal power move. This is especially true when help comes in the form of shallow solutions offered by politicians to complex problems. In terms of cultural textuality, appearances of offers of help bring with them a complex paradigm of privilege and guilt. As part of the cultural textuality, this duality of privilege and guilt manifests in texts through the white saviour trope, to be consumed and reproduced by text producers.

This is where the third level of analysis, the societal, comes in. Societal investigation relates to the broader context within which newspaper discourses intersect and relate with the current Canadian political and societal contexts. According to Kristeva, “a meaning in the text itself and a meaning in ... ‘the historical and social text’” are interrelated in that both are influenced by the current social and political climate in which they are written and by the texts that came before them.¹³⁴ This creation, influence, and reflection of the current social and political climate in newspapers comes into being through intersections of political debate, public discussion, policy creation, and reporting on the facts. In essence, with regard to writing, nothing is created in a vacuum. Rather, it is influenced by the *zeitgeist*, or “the spirit

¹³⁴ Ibid, 37.

of the times,” the texts that came before it, and the voices that are given priority for inclusion and expression.¹³⁵

This third level of analysis locates Eurocentric political and societal powers as evident in the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* that lend credence to the notion of “saving Indigenous people.” The analysis then examines how the notion of salvation acts to alleviate any sense of a collective politicized guilt by creating the perception of having done *something*. This analysis is achieved in a more diffused sense, with the aim of revealing how the white saviour trope now operates as a politicized tool in the current age of reconciliation.

To aid in this analysis, Jeff Corntassel’s work with Indigenous approaches to reconciliation, and his arguments on how the TRC “allows political leaders and settler populations to deal with residual guilt,” are a useful counterargument to the dominant rhetoric in mainstream newspapers.¹³⁶ He argues that reconciliation is a word with religious connotations and is an act that seeks to maintain the status quo “within a Western model of justice.”¹³⁷ Using an Indigenous storytelling methodology that works through “relational accountability and truth-telling,” his interviews with seven residential school survivors point to the failures of current reconciliation efforts, centred mainly on the lack of consideration for

¹³⁵ In an explanation of *zeitgeist*, Glenn Alexander Magee, an associate professor of philosophy at Long Island University, explains that, “Hegel believes that each time period and its unique spirit is a stage in the development of World Spirit itself; a particular, cultural step in humanity’s long struggle to come to consciousness of itself. As this process is ongoing, individuals are themselves always expressions of their place in history and its limitations. Thus they can never step completely out of their time period in order to comprehend the world and themselves ‘objectively’.” It’s worth noting that Hegel never actually used the term *zeitgeist*, but only “*geist*” to discuss the “spirit.” Still, the term *zeitgeist* is associated with his philosophy; See Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, (New York: Continuum Books, 2010), 262.

¹³⁶ Jeff Corntassel, “Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and community approaches to reconciliation.” *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 35, no. 1 (March 2009): 144.

<http://www.corntassel.net/IndigenousStorytelling%202009.pdf>

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 146.

land, individual recognition for those who lived off reserves, intergenerational healing, suitable restitution, and the allowance of Indigenous people to “restory” their history.¹³⁸

By juxtaposing the language used in the newspaper sample against the concepts put forth by Corntassel, the third level of analysis reveals how the white saviour trope, as manifested in the case of Grassy Narrows coverage, acts against reconciliation efforts, creating a sense of doing something while ignoring or silencing Indigenous voices and concerns.

The articles in the sample were organized chronologically in order to identify how the language, registers, and coverage has evolved in the past forty-two years. Phrases of each article were organized according to factual statements, descriptions, and reactionary phrases. Since this thesis seeks to examine a manifestation of a societal struggle embedded in language, the reactionary phrases were the primary focus for analysis.

The reactionary phrases were written down on colour-coded cards that were further arranged according to how many times they were repeated, either word for word or through synonyms, and were organized in association with a specific register. There were four main registers identified using this method of organizing the data: privilege, guilt, savagery, and inferiority. Each register was further organized according to specific discourses that emerged in the identified common keywords and common phrases and are related to the experiential values expressed. Since registers, according to James S. McLean, “may be used to frame an issue within certain thematic categories that resonate broadly with the value commitments of multiple publics,” organizing the data in such a way reflects the larger idea in this thesis that the white saviour trope is a societal phenomenon tied to generalized values.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid, 146-147.

¹³⁹ James S. McLean, *Inside the NDP War Room: Competing for Credibility in a Federal Election*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 143.

The next chapter will reveal the findings from the textual analysis. The textual analysis of the sample will reveal the multiple discourses associated with each register, the most common reoccurring reactionary phrases, and the most common keywords. In the final chapter, the intertextuality analysis will reveal the similarities and differences between two key saturation points of coverage. Finally, the societal analysis in the final chapter will reveal how the coverage is in keeping with the past and current *zeitgeist*. This will be achieved by exploring five key narratives that facilitate the continuation of Eurocentric political and societal powers through the white saviour trope, while simultaneously struggling with a sense of guilt and privilege.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

This chapter outlines the main findings of the analysis of newspaper coverage of the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows. Coverage of the mercury contamination was analyzed longitudinally between 1977 and 2019. Through this analysis, a similarity in coverage emerged between 1977 and 1986, and between 2014 and 2018. As expected, these two time frames of in-depth coverage revealed specific phrases and discourses associated with the white saviour trope.

Using the organizational approach of Fairclough's three dimensional analytical framework, the findings reveal the patterns associated with the white saviour. However, given the significance and complexity of the findings, this chapter will only discuss the first part of the framework: the textual. The more in-depth binary opposition deconstruction analysis and discussion into the intertextual and societal relevance of these findings are reserved for the final chapter.

In this sample of 244 articles, 211 excerpts contained aspects of the white saviour trope. The majority of the passages come from *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, as the *National Post* had little coverage of the mercury contamination at Grassy Narrows.

Phrases relevant to the white saviour trope were organized according to registers that best fit the intending meaning. The phrases were then further organized according to a specific discourse under that register. Given the multifaceted properties of the white saviour trope, organizing the phrases meant keeping the excerpts intact. Doing so created a way to accurately identify the various components that come together to create the trope as a whole; components primarily centred around registers of privilege, guilt, perceived inferiority, and savagery.

These particular registers are important because privilege and guilt are associated with white or non-Indigenous representations, while perceived inferiority and savagery are

associated with Indigenous representations. In this case, the representations of non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples are juxtaposed or placed in binary opposition to one another. As previously mentioned these binaries are referred to in the Derridean sense, “that Western metaphysics is based on a system of binary operations or conceptual oppositions,” often with one represented as superior over the other.¹⁴⁰ For instance, white is often represented as superior to black.

It became evident quite quickly that the phrases relevant to the trope reveal its complex embedded nature as a whole within the extended discursive formation represented in newspaper coverage of Indigenous people and issues. In the case of Grassy Narrows and mercury contamination, the binary opposition of these registers become problematic, because they lend to the perpetuation of the idea that Indigenous people are still inferior and in need of colonial guidance. For example, the matter of the people in Grassy Narrows eating mercury-contaminated fish is referenced throughout the coverage. These references are also often made in opposition to the government warnings to not eat the fish and the import of non-polluted fish for consumption. Consistently, any mention that people are eating contaminated fish perpetuates the idea that the Indigenous people of Grassy Narrows are uncivilized and are incapable of adequately caring for themselves and their families without government intervention.

As this chapter unpacks the meaning in each register, the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous representations and the idea that one group is superior to the other will be explained more fully through the lens of the white saviour trope.

Each register is further reduced to relevant discourses and reactionary phrases identified within the sample. The majority of the phrases contain multiple sentences since the

¹⁴⁰ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 110-111.

sentences work together to create the discourses and, by association, the registers that they are identified with. While reducing each of the larger phrases to single sentences helped identify pertinent keywords initially, keeping the phrases intact facilitates better discourse identification and analysis. This also means that there are many common phrases that contain more than one register, signifying the complexity of identifying the white saviour trope. This complexity of multiple sentences working together to create such a discourse suggests a possibility as to why it can be so difficult to detect the trope without deeper analysis or, at the very least, critical thinking. As mentioned in the previous chapter, suitably focused critical thinking and some amount of introspection have been discussed by some researchers in Indigenous Studies as being crucial for non-Indigenous scholars to decolonize themselves and to identify the effects of colonialism.

Thus, the experiential values expressed through these common reactionary phrases and keywords become the first step in identifying the embedded nature of aspects of colonialism within the written language, particularly language that manifests in the form of the white saviour trope.

This study found four major registers and eleven discourses associated with the white saviour trope. The registers identified are privilege, guilt, savagery, and inferiority.

- The discourses associated with privilege circulate around matters of “government and politicization,” “issues of government intervention,” “taking advantage of news coverage,” and “speaking on behalf of.”
- The discourses associated with guilt circulate around “reactions to guilt” and “appeals to guilt.”
- The discourses associated with savagery circulate around matters pertaining to “the need to save” and “combateness.”

- Finally, the discourses associated with inferiority circulate around matters of “backwardness,” “ignorance,” and “helplessness.”

Each of these related groupings will be unpacked throughout this chapter by identifying the frequency of each combination within the sample, the most common keywords in the group, and important examples. The implications and importance of each grouping will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

“Privilege: government and politicization”

The first register and related discourse that will be identified is “privilege: government and politicization.”

There were thirty-nine common phrases associated with this register and related discourse beginning on December 31, 1982, with the last phrase appearing on April 02, 2019. The phrases included in this category contained political promises for action, corporate statements, reference to visiting politicians, calls for Indigenous people to take ownership of problems, debates over provincial and federal jurisdiction, funding for further studies and cleanup, promises of future research into solutions, fish consumption advisories, government apologies, appeals to responsibility to Indigenous people, and government statements of commitment to cleaning up the mercury contamination.¹⁴¹

These phrases are significant because they illuminate how the language used by journalists is often government-centred. Coverage is most often focused on what the government is doing or not doing to solve the problem. These phrases act to perpetuate the cycle of domination of the people of Grassy Narrows by enforcing the belief that they cannot care for themselves or are incapable of choosing what is best for themselves without government intervention or assistance.

¹⁴¹ Appendix 1

The phrases and keywords associated with “privilege: government and politicization” were consistent through the timeframe, varying only slightly over time. This suggests little change in the discourse surrounding the government’s involvement in the Grassy Narrows case and the general continuing call for government action to rectify the mercury contamination.¹⁴²

Actually, the keywords reveal a deeper level of discourse that exists within the language used by journalists. Within these reactionary phrases important keywords are repeated throughout. Not surprisingly, “government” is the most common, which is in line with the overall discourse associated with these phrases. The next most common keywords and phrases are “commitment,” “do something,” “eat the fish,” “help,” “justice,” “money,” “contamination,” “promise,” “responsibility,” “solutions,” and “study.”¹⁴³

These keywords are significant. According to their experiential values, the journalists are revealing their belief in justice for the people of Grassy Narrows. However, by placing the responsibility on the government to solve the problem, they are politicizing the issue of mercury contamination. To look at it another way, if the keywords were constructed to form a sentence, it would reveal a discourse that exposes the underlying experiential values. Such a sentence would suggest that the mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows is a chance for a responsible government to commit to doing something meaningful in and for the community. Unfortunately, such a sentence would allow little room for the people of Grassy Narrows to exercise their own right to determine for themselves the best course of action. Responsibility would be placed solely with the government. Thus, the issue of mercury contamination becomes a politicized tool put forth by journalists and wielded by politicians.

¹⁴² The greatest change in the discourse came in what umbrella term was used in order to identify the Indigenous people. In this timeframe, the 1970s to the 2010s, the people went from being referred to as “Indians” to “Aboriginals,” and are now referred to as “Indigenous.” The significance of this patriarchal nominal change is not addressed in this thesis, however.

¹⁴³ See appendix 1

“Privilege: government intervention”

The second register and related discourse is unique in that it emerges in one form or another in most of the two hundred and eleven reactionary phrases and typically occurs only in conjunction with other registers and discourses.

This particular discourse was not expected to emerge in any significant way; however, its relationship to "privilege: government and politicization" is important. By further limiting some phrases associated with "privilege: government and politicization" to "privilege: government intervention," it was revealed how often governments promised to fix the mercury pollution and contamination problem in Grassy Narrows, and how often journalists repeated or relied on those political promises in their reporting.

Of the thirty-nine common phrases associated with "privilege: government and politicization," many of the phrases contain some form of promised government intervention, whether in the form of money, infrastructure, or contamination cleanup. Within the government, this tendency suggests the continuance of a patriarchal system that aims to manage the Indigenous people without involving them in determining the best way forward, or even necessarily considering long-term benefits. Journalists in this mode tend to use a simplified political language in their factual news reporting.

For example, published in February 14, 2017 in *Globe and Mail*, the following statement is a response from relevant government officials in light of positive mercury findings in the area of Grassy Narrows, attention from the press, and activism in Ottawa. The full article entitled "Ontario to do more mercury tests at Grassy Narrows," was published a month after *Toronto Star* investigators Jayme Poisson and David Bruser took soil samples from the alleged mercury dump site for testing.

‘We are completely committed to working with all partners to identify all potentially contaminated sites, and to creating and implementing a

comprehensive remediation action plan for the English Wabigoon River,’ Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Minister David Zimmer said in a statement. ‘We need to be sure unequivocally if the site is an ongoing source of mercury, and if it is, then we need to work with partners to take all measures to stop further mercury from entering the river.’¹⁴⁴

Over a year passes and no improvements are made to the conditions in Grassy Narrows. Still, reporting on the governments’ promises continues as journalists at the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* continue writing stories in order to keep political power accountable.

When the Ontario government promises \$85-million towards cleaning up the river system in the summer of 2017 progress seems inevitable. However, the promise goes unfulfilled. On December 5, 2018, journalist David Bruser of the *Toronto Star* again seeks to hold the government accountable in his article "Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children.”

Last year, the provincial government committed \$85 million to clean up the river and the federal government has pledged to help build a mercury care home that will help some of the sickest residents. The cleanup work has not yet begun, though experts are conducting research to determine how to best remediate the river.¹⁴⁵

Note that the focus remains on further research and a reliance on experts.

In these two examples the relationship between political promises and the language used by journalists is illuminating. Both focus on actions and promises by the government, both focus on the need for further research, and both use language that creates the

¹⁴⁴ Allison Jones, "Ontario to do more mercury tests at Grassy Narrows," *Globe and Mail*, last modified February 14, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ David Bruser, "Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children," *Toronto Star*, last modified December 05, 2018.

perception that something is being done to alleviate the suffering of those in Grassy Narrows. The language used by the journalist is simple in contrast to the formal political language, but such is the job of a journalist. Journalists are required to take complex ideas and make them readable by the widest audience possible. Furthermore, the first excerpt is a reactionary statement from Ontario government officials, while the second is factual reporting.

This difference between the two excerpts is important because the intertextuality between government statements and the language used by journalists suggests that a textual relationship between the two exists. It shows that journalists are not aware of their tendency to repeat the patriarchal promises of government officials, thus perpetuating the privileged aspect of the white saviour trope.

“Privilege: taking advantage of media coverage”

The third register and related discourse is "privilege: taking advantage of media coverage.”

Between January 12, 1983 and January 13, 2017, there were six common phrases that emerged under this register and discourse combination. This infrequency suggests that “privilege: taking advantage of media coverage” is not a significant aspect of the white saviour trope. This is not surprising considering the criteria for this particular discourse is so narrow; that is, the phrases had to include people who were using the coverage of Grassy Narrows or the community itself to further their own agenda. Still, there is some coverage of activists using the protests to further their own cause, and of people using the contamination problem to achieve their own career goals, such as scientists using the pollution and crisis to obtain funding, or as the object of study to obtain an academic credential.

For example, the following passage is from an article entitled “Tainted soil discovered near Grassy Narrows” published in the *Toronto Star* on January 13, 2017. It references a report written by a researcher on the topic of measuring mercury in the environment:

Rudd - one of the authors of that report, who is currently working with Grassy Narrows and has received provincial funding to measure mercury contamination in the Wabigoon River system - said the entire area around the old paper processing plant should be examined because historically these types of plants have been known to be sources of contamination long after they stopped using mercury in the paper-bleaching process.¹⁴⁶

This passage is significant because at the same time as the province was debating who would pay for the clean up of the mercury, whether the source of funding would be federal, provincial, or corporate, the scientist in question, Rudd, was able to receive provincial funding to measure contamination in the area!

In essence, the provincial government funded a study for something that had been studied extensively since the 1970s. The scientist appears to benefit from the contamination issue and the government, by extension, appears to be doing something, but the evidence suggests that the people of Grassy Narrows received no benefit from either action. The other five passages are very much the same: various people with a certain amount of privilege appear to benefit from identifying or studying the contamination at Grassy Narrows, while people in the community continue to be negatively affected by the contamination.¹⁴⁷

Yet, the relative infrequency of the “privilege: taking advantage of media coverage” register/discourse indicates that the issue of entitlement — the use by privileged

¹⁴⁶ Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, “Tainted soil discovered near Grassy Narrows,” *Toronto Star*, last modified January 13, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ See appendix 2

non-Indigenous people of publicity about a tragedy to further their own ends — is not purposefully a major focal point for journalists. Indeed, it appears that journalists did not regularly or purposefully seek out people who were using the media attention as a means to further their own message.

Of the keywords repeated throughout, the most common are “government,” “contamination,” and “validity.” As they are, the keywords are not surprising given the context of the common phrases because most of the quotes discussed the validity of data, the validity of the claims put forth by the residents of Grassy Narrows, and the protests against the lack of government response to the contamination. However, as will be explained in the next chapter, when deconstructed and replaced with their binary opposites “contamination” and “validity” are very significant discursive indicators.

“Privilege: speaking on behalf of”

The fourth register and related discourse is “privilege: speaking on behalf of.”

Between April 6, 1982 and March 30, 2019, there were twenty-one common phrases under this register and discourse combination. The reactionary phrases under this category include those from protestors, scientists, educators, writers, and journalists who repeated the same messages as the residents of Grassy Narrows. These messages included common signifiers such as “pollution,” “poverty,” and “deteriorating health.” Such messages were usually aimed at government intervention but with significant larger quotes, and were focused on non-Indigenous perspectives. This discursive formation is important because it reveals how messages and pleas of help were seemingly more valid when they came from non-Indigenous people or people with fame and power.

For instance, on June 28, 2017, *Toronto Star* investigative journalists Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie wrote the following:

The province's historic commitment follows a *Star* investigation that probed the impact of the contamination and decades-long lack of action by government. And it comes after decades of activism by Grassy Narrows community members, from chiefs to mothers to youth. [...] The major announcement came the day before environmentalist David Suzuki was scheduled to visit Grassy Narrows. He was expected to hear strong concerns from the First Nation over the government's progress on its commitment to clean up the mercury.¹⁴⁸

The journalists do acknowledge certain Grassy Narrows community members, Indigenous activists, but also appear to claim that the government only took action after their investigation. This suggests, peripherally, that the journalists' claims were more valid than those put forth by Indigenous activists. Doing so negates the fact that in 1985 the government reached a \$16-million settlement with the people of Grassy Narrows and with the neighbouring community of Whitedog. At that time, there was little journalistic social-justice intervention, and there were even fewer non-Indigenous activists acting on behalf of the Indigenous people of Grassy Narrows. The first two sentences negate that historical fact and act to recreate the notion of non-Indigenous superiority and Indigenous helplessness.

Moreover, this sentiment is further strengthened by the mention of David Suzuki, a well-known and outspoken environmental activist, who "expect[s] to hear strong concerns" when he visits the community.¹⁴⁹ Here, the tone of conflict and unease is imagined through the lens of Indigenous reactions, but without verification, such as a quote from anyone from Grassy Narrows!

In fact, within the same article, Grassy Narrows Chief Simon Fobister is quoted saying the opposite: "This river is the lifeblood of my people," says Fobister. "For too long we have

¹⁴⁸ Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie, "Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup," *Toronto Star*, last modified June 28, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

suffered from this preventable tragedy. May this be the beginning of a new era of hope for my people, and may justice flow at long last.”¹⁵⁰ This quote is rather optimistic when compared to the reported expectations from Suzuki. Therein lies the danger of “privilege: speaking on behalf of” those who are better equipped to speak their own truth because they have the lived experience to back up their claims. The example underscores how reactions and feelings of Indigenous people are often overshadowed by people whose intentions are good, but whose actions in defending the “helpless” are often self-serving.

Of the keywords repeated throughout the register, the most common are “activist,” “action,” “arrogance,” “commitment,” “government,” “contamination,” “rights,” “suffer,” and “way of life.”¹⁵¹ These keywords are significant. Their experiential values suggest that journalists Poisson, Bruser, and Benzie are seeking to hold the government accountable to its commitment to allocate funds towards cleaning up the contamination and to building a mercury treatment facility.

However, if we consider the phrase “way of life,” which is also common to other discourses, journalistic accounts seem to take the archaic position that Indigenous life exists in a “state of nature,” a popularized stereotypical and romanticized response to solving Indigenous issues and a term that has also been applied to examinations of land claims and law.¹⁵²

In this case, when the “state of nature” is mentioned in the form of “way of life,” the authors are in fact alluding to a time before the discovery of mercury pollution in the community, a romanticized version of the people living in harmony with the natural environment in a pristine state of nature. This allusion was common in the 1980s when

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Eva Mackey, “Unsettling Expectations: (Un) certainty, settler states of feeling, law, and decolonization,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 29, no 2 (2014): 242. doi:10.1017/cls.2014.10.

newspaper articles in the sample focused on Japanese mercury researchers and a Canadian anthropologist who lived in Grassy Narrows for two and a half years. It was the latter who painted a picture of an Indigenous culture that could not adapt to change and that should be permitted to return to its supposed natural state of hunting, fishing, and generally living off the land.

The following was written by *Globe and Mail*'s Ken MacQueen on January 12, 1983:

The \$33,000 study by Anastasia Shkilnyk says the federal Indian Affairs Department's decision to shift the reserve about 10 kilometres in the early 1960s played a major part in destroying its traditional way of life. [...] But band members were separated from traditional hunting and fishing areas and were crowded into reserve housing on a stagnant waterway, the report says. The rocky soil meant they could no longer even grow their own vegetables. Where they once bought lard, flour and other staples, their diet soon shifted to canned goods, junk food and soft drinks. Kenora taxi drivers began the profitable business of bootlegging liquor to a once-dry reserve.¹⁵³

Contrast this with a passage published in the *Toronto Star* on November 23, 2017, excerpted from an opinion piece written by Stephen Bede Scharper, a professor of environment and anthropology at the University of Toronto, and Annamaria Enenajor, a Toronto criminal defence and constitutional lawyer:

The experience of Grassy Narrows must be understood as part of the legacy of decades of mistreatment of Canada's Indigenous people by the government and industry - something that follows from extortionist government policies that

¹⁵³ Though it is not mentioned in the article, Dr. Shkilnyk was in Grassy Narrows conducting an ethnographic study as part of her PhD dissertation in anthropology; Ken MacQueen, "Ottawa is blamed for near-collapse of Indian reserve," *Globe and Mail*, last modified January 12, 1983.

forcibly removed Indigenous communities to areas unsuited to their traditional ways of life.¹⁵⁴

Between 1983 and 2017 the discourse shifted from depicting Indigenous people as unable to adapt to depicting the government as primarily at fault.

Indeed, there is a shift in the phrases and keywords under the “privilege: speaking on behalf of” category, in contrast to the “privilege: government and politicization” category, which saw little change over the same period. In the articles from the early 1980s, the popular tendency is to focus on the idea that the Indigenous people of Grassy Narrows need an outsider to speak for them, and that they are clinging to their traditional way of life by continuing to eat contaminated fish and are unable to change or withstand change. However, in the 2000s, the tendency to focus on the activists and scientists openly condemning the federal and provincial governments and the corporations responsible for the mercury leaks is more popular.

This shift is significant because the blame for the living conditions shifted to more abstractly blaming the government and industry as a whole, as opposed to specifically identifying and faulting the federal Indian Affairs Department and alcohol abuse as a result of social disruption. In both excerpts, an anthropologist is referring to the grandiose idea of “way of life” while avoiding specifics about what that actually means. This was first done through a journalist, then was directly an opinion piece published in an influential newspaper.

“Guilt: reactions and appeals to”

The fifth register and related discourse is “guilt: reactions and appeals to.”

There were thirty common phrases associated with this register and related discourse beginning September 24, 1983, and continuing until December 5, 2018. This combination of

¹⁵⁴ Stephen Bede Scharper and Annamaria Enenajor, “Grassy Narrows contamination a crime against humanity?” *Toronto Star*, last modified November 23, 2017.

register and discourse was the second-largest register and discourse combination after “privilege: government and politicization,” suggesting on some levels that guilt is still being felt and contended with within Canadian society. These top two combinations were also found occurring together and make up twenty-seven of the seventy-eight common phrases of two or more registers and discourses.

The majority of the instances of the appearance of “guilt: reactions and appeals to” occurred around the Christmas holiday season, either one to two months before or after. This is significant because the discourse can be associated with the holiday spirit of giving, in some sense, since in and around that time, especially where Christian values of generosity and charity are central, messages about selfless giving are common and widely disseminated by all kinds of media. Publishing the articles with phrases that contain guilt registers and discourses at such a time may be unintentional, but it does suggest an underlying need to contend with feelings of guilt.

Consider the following passages that contain appeals to guilt buried in the words chosen by journalists. Published in the *Toronto Star* on February 28, 2016, the first passage comes from an article written by Jim Coyle about protestors from Grassy Narrows who brought their case before the UN. Coyle relied heavily on a quote from the Deputy Chief at the time to create a picture of hopelessness and despair, even choosing to use a word like “tragedy”:

The river system was “the lifeblood of our people,” [Deputy Chief Randy Fobister] said. Fishing provided food, employment and was part of the “culture of our people.” But after the mercury was dumped, the same waters that brought nourishment carried tragedy and “a severe health crisis in our community.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Jim Coyle, “Fighting to clear the poisoned waters,” *Toronto Star*, last modified February 28, 2016.

Coyle's choice to use quotes to add a level of emotion to his writing appears to ensure that his objectivity is intact. However, choosing to use the word tragedy to contrast Grassy Narrows' past with its current plight reveals Coyle's sensitivity to the issue.

Published almost a year later, an article written by Gloria Galloway at *Globe and Mail* on January 2, 2017 reveals a deeper level of emotional sensitivity on the part of the journalist. The following passage from that article contains emotionally laden words that could elicit a guilt response: "Many First Nations in Canada are coping with the negative environmental consequences of development on or near their territories, but few have endured hardships like those suffered in Grassy Narrows, where 90 per cent of residents are showing signs of mercury contamination."¹⁵⁶ Words such as endured, hardship, and suffering signify a deeply felt remorse on the part of the journalist. Indeed, by choosing to use such words, the journalist reveals her state of mind about the conditions at Grassy Narrows. Moreover, Galloway chose to use these words in an article that focuses on the lack of government intervention.

Some evidence suggests that Coyle and Galloway are perhaps not alone in their feelings about the state of Grassy Narrows. Published on June 11, 2016, in between the two above articles, the letter to the editor below appeared in the *Toronto Star*. Written by Beatrice Cleary of Toronto, the letter contains similar sentiments to Coyle's passage and similar words to Galloway's passage. However, the emotional intent of her chosen words is obvious, since, unlike Coyle and Galloway, Cleary does not have to appear objective or unbiased:

I have been deeply conflicted by our inaction for the native people of Canada. We read about their poverty and the inhumane conditions many of them live in, their lack of safe drinking water and lack of proper bathroom facilities in many of their homes. We read about the many health issues caused by their living conditions, we shake our heads and do nothing. We commiserate about the increasing number

¹⁵⁶ Gloria Galloway, "Grassy Narrows chief urges PM to start river cleanup," *Globe and Mail*, last modified January 2, 2017.

of suicides in that population but do nothing. We nod in agreement when we read that something should be done but nothing has happened to make their lives better and more equitable. [...] We by our inaction are allowing people to suffer and die. We may not be the direct cause of their circumstances, but by being silent we are allowing what is happening to them.¹⁵⁷

This letter leans heavily on Canadian societal values, primarily that Canadians are altruistic. Cleary relied heavily on this deeply embedded value within Canadian society, perhaps in the hope of eliciting some sort of an emotional public reaction, the same one that she is clearly wrangling with. This is important because the letter signifies a type of dissonance, especially in a reader who has clearly been following the extended coverage of Grassy Narrows as is inferred by the title of her letter “Act now on Grassy Narrows.”

It is within these three examples that evidence of intertextuality between journalists and readers becomes evident in that each is directly influencing the other: a journalist appeals to guilt, a reader publicly reacts to feelings of guilt, and another journalist echoes reactions to guilt through similar word choices. This relationship suggests that in the case of guilt, journalists are deeply influenced by the general sentiment of the time. In other words, journalists unknowingly reflect the feelings of the public they serve in times of public outcry.

Of the keywords repeated throughout, the most common are “damage,” “death,” “harm,” “health,” “help,” “problem,” “racism,” “shameful,” “suffer,” and “suicides.” Given the experiential values of these keywords, and the value-rich appeals and reactions just discussed, it seems clear that appeals to guilt are common. As mentioned, many of the appeals were geared towards health and healthcare, or, rather, the lack of either. Therefore, it makes sense to use words that are emotionally charged like death, shameful, suffer, and suicides. However, the outright appeal comes in the form of the word “help,” which acts almost as a

¹⁵⁷ Beatrice Cleary, “Act now on Grassy Narrows,” *Toronto Star*, last modified June 11, 2016.

beacon to action in light of the dissonance that has already been created by appealing to the values of altruism and universal healthcare.

Indeed, "guilt: reactions and appeals to" make up a very important part of the white saviour trope, especially since colonialism was guided by the desire to exploit that was often touted as a need to save.

"Savage: need to save"

The sixth register and related discourse is "savage: need to save."

There were thirteen common phrases associated with this register and related discourse beginning April 27, 1978 and ending on December 5, 2018. The reactionary phrases included in this category include comments on the supposed inability of the people of Grassy Narrows to "adjust to the new reserve location," "tendency for idleness and alcoholism," "reliance on government and welfare systems," "gas sniffing," "land rights and logging blockades," "eating contaminated fish," "joblessness," and the "legacy of colonialism."¹⁵⁸

The most commonly repeated keywords are "alcohol," "drunk," "eat the fish," "health," "land," "poverty," and "work." Considering the experiential values of these keywords, there appears to be a deeply held assumption that journalists have about life in Grassy Narrows, primarily that drinking alcohol is common, as is eating the contaminated fish and living in poverty. These keywords and phrases then further combine with issues of health, land claims, and lack of work interwoven into the larger issues faced by the community. The discourse of "need to save" emerges when living conditions are written about in a way that contrasts with the ideals of "civilized" living conditions, which then plays on the belief that such problems do not exist in civilized parts of Canada such as southern Ontario where the newspapers, journalists, and the majority of readers hail from.

¹⁵⁸ Appendix 4

While some of the ideas about the living conditions may be true, especially in a remote reserve such as Grassy Narrows, phrases such as “[...] the community has been plagued with intractable problems that affect First Nations communities across the country: extreme poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction and suicides” perpetuates the idea that *all* First Nations communities exist in such state.¹⁵⁹ This is problematic because it also perpetuates the idea of “the helpless Indian,” especially since the excerpt above is from an extensive investigative series done by the *Toronto Star* over two years that received a great deal of attention and support from others in the newspaper industry and from the community of Canadian journalists.

There is also the assumption that journalists will only report on matters that will get readers’ attention. It is possible that instances of alcoholism and lack of work are the exception in the community, not the rule, especially considering that as reported by the *Globe and Mail* in 1985 “[...]many residents [of Grassy Narrows] are increasingly uncomfortable with the portrayal in the media of conditions they say existed a decade ago.”¹⁶⁰

By contrasting life in Grassy Narrows in direct opposition to that experienced by a reader in, say, southern Ontario, a kind of cognitive dissonance is elicited.¹⁶¹ The relation of the discourse of “need to save” to the discourse of “guilt” stems largely from such cognitive dissonance.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, “Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels,” *Toronto Star*, last modified February 13, 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Rudy Platiel, “Grassy Narrows hoping to escape its troubled past,” *Globe and Mail*, last modified December 24, 1985.

¹⁶¹ As previously mentioned, cognitive dissonance is when a person seeks “information that justifies their attitudes, behaviours, or decisions, [in order to] ... decrease the dissonance felt. By avoiding inconsistent information, the individual avoids triggering dissonance or increasing its magnitude.” In this case, people of a type of privilege, financially wealth, food security, etc., tend to attempt to “save” those living in substandard conditions, or seemingly uncivilized lifestyles, through any means available. This tendency will be discussed more fully in the following chapter.

¹⁶² This relationship will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter.

Unfortunately, the effect of the discourse of “need to save” means that attention is diverted away from the primary issue at hand: that is, the neglect of Indigenous people, and their disempowerment. This, in turn, acts to condemn them to a state of helplessness that is reinforced through language, policy, and government intervention.

“Savage: combative”

The seventh register and related discourse identified is "savage: combative.”

There were twelve common phrases associated with this register and related discourse beginning on April 1, 1978 and ending on October 10, 2018. The reactionary phrases included in this category include allusions to threats of violence, racial prejudice against non-Indigenous people, and hints that Indigenous people need to be “dealt with.” These phrases are problematic because they perpetuate the notion that Indigenous people are somehow a threat.

From these reactionary phrases there was only one repeated keyword: “white.”¹⁶³ This word was repeated twice in 1986, but it is an important instance because it set the tone for future coverage when connotations of race and perceived racial differences became less obvious.

Consider the following two reactionary phrases: "But the Anisinabe Indians told the first Ontario premier to visit their reserve that they won't stand by while the ‘dominant society’ of white men and women exploit their land and deny them their rights” and "Neither is self-pity the answer. It's much healthier to simply carry on as if the white man's rules and regulations don't exist, [Josephine Mandamin] says. Game wardens, ‘if they're smart, stay away. They bother other Indians but they don't bother me.’”¹⁶⁴ These reactionary phrases

¹⁶³ Appendix 5

¹⁶⁴ Denis Harrington, “Peterson honored as natives celebrate end of contamination case,” *Toronto Star*, last modified 12 September, 1986; Susan Reid, "Indian woman clings to her traditions Scoffs at compensation as answer to Whitedog's problems,” *Toronto Star*, last modified November 12, 1986; Note that Whitedog is the sister reserve of Grassy Narrows, and although they were exposed to the mercury contamination as well, the community received little news media attention.

mention race with allusions to violence, a tendency for quarrelsomeness, and generalized racial difference. In these allusions, there are linguistic echoes of the imperial archive, Kipling, and Davin.

Even in more recent representations where open racial identification is considered a taboo, many of these prescribed racial attributes still emerge. An excerpt from a 2014 story contains similar sentiments couched in less combative language: "Native groups including Grassy Narrows pounced on this point to argue that the province must still negotiate with them before going forward" and "in a statement Friday, Grassy Narrows said it would continue to 'resist the expansion of unsustainable industrial logging in our territory.'"¹⁶⁵

While this coverage was concerned with logging blockades, primarily because experts insisted that logging was linked to further mercury contamination, the phrases still hold the notion of the "chronic querulousness" which Davin wrote about in the 19th century, and are expressed by verbs like "pounce," "argue," and "resist." This also brings to mind the characterization by Kipling of the "half-devil, half-child" Indigenous person. This is important because expressing race in such a way contains hints of the experiential value of a perceived division between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, with one superior over the other. In this manner, registers of savagery emerge, especially when juxtaposed against the characterization of non-Indigenous people as calm, levelheaded, and civilized.

"Inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless"

The eighth register and related discourse is "inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless."

There were twelve common phrases associated with this register and related discourse beginning on December 8, 1977 and continuing until February 13, 2018. The majority of the

¹⁶⁵ Vincent Donovan, "Top court rejects First Nation's logging appeal," *Toronto Star*, last modified July 12, 2014.

passages dealt with the supposed inability of the people at Grassy Narrows to change and to adapt to changes forced upon them, their reliance on spiritualism, their differences from non-Indigenous people (especially in regard to alcoholism), and their supposed uncivilized lifestyle and world outlook.

For example, in April 1978, the *Globe and Mail*'s Michael Moore depicted Grassy Narrows as a community that was trying to get back on its feet after suffering relocation, mercury contamination, job loss, and rampant alcoholism. While the main focus of the article was on the alcohol abuse by some in the community, the passage below appears to illustrate the journalist's inability to effectively recreate exchanges and interviews with Indigenous people without making them appear uneducated or uncivilized:

Elder Joe Beaver has also described a factor that the planners could not have taken into account: what might best be translated as the aura of the land. The old site, he has said, radiates a rich, good spirit, while the new site gives off evil.¹⁶⁶

Elder Joe Beaver's paraphrased quote resembles observations by Geneviève Couchie (See: Chapter 2). Couchie stated that, "[journalists] seem to go more verbatim with quotes of Indigenous people."¹⁶⁷ In the case of a paraphrase, however, Moore decided to resort to representations of Indigenous people that rely on stereotypical beliefs in mysticism, resorting to uneducated ways to explain natural phenomena, and of being closer to nature than non-Indigenous people.¹⁶⁸

However, what was most prevalent in the "inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless" register was the idea that when it comes to money and financial management, Indigenous people are child-like and irresponsible. In the same article, Moore chose to resort to

¹⁶⁶ Michael Moore, "THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward," *Globe and Mail*, last modified April 27, 1978.

¹⁶⁷ Geneviève Couchie (resident in Garden Village, Ontario), in discussion with the author, January 2019.

¹⁶⁸ In this case "uneducated" means in reference to the Western ideals of education, of using science to explain natural phenomena. In no way am I suggesting that Indigenous pedagogy is inferior, simply that it is often portrayed as such.

describing the supposed child-like tendencies of Indigenous people after payday: “The next weekend was a big payday, \$20,000 of cheques were cashed at the Hudson's Bay Co. store, and before the spree petered out early the following week, 20 people had been charged, 17 of them for liquor offences.”¹⁶⁹

A more recent example published in the *Toronto Star* in 2017 also points to the tendency to resort to depictions of inferiority when it comes to financial management. Written by David Bruser, the article covers David Suzuki’s visit to Grassy Narrows the day after the provincial government promised \$85 million towards cleaning up the Wabigoon River system: “‘Governments have promised us big things, and then it never happened,’ [Judy Da Silva] said. ‘My community can't really fathom what the \$85 million means.’”¹⁷⁰ On the one hand, this quote seems to validate the action taken by the government in the form of a promised \$85 million towards cleaning up the river. On the other hand, the journalist chose to include a quote that depicts all residents of Grassy Narrows as incapable of imagining what a large sum of money could mean to their community.

This is problematic because it perpetuates the notion of the uneducated and uncivilized savage. True, even the most educated person cannot imagine what \$85-million could mean to them or their community; however, *how* this lack of understanding is portrayed is problematic. Bruser decided to contrast Da Silva’s quote against government statements of support for the financial promise and against the eloquent speeches given by Suzuki. It is worth noting that Bruser quoted Suzuki saying in response to the \$85-million promise that, “Perhaps (my visit) hurried them up. But I really believe the government has a good heart. I have a great deal of time for Kathleen (Wynne) and Glen (Murray).”¹⁷¹ Through his choices, Bruser is unknowingly furthering the idea that Da Silva is an uneducated Indigenous person,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ David Bruser, "Suzuki visits Grassy Narrows," *Toronto Star*, last modified June 29, 2017.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

especially since he also includes quotes of her praising Suzuki for his protests on behalf of Grassy Narrows.

Bruser's quote choices lend some support to embedded beliefs of Indigenous financial mismanagement, a stereotype that acts to signify helplessness. Within notions of financial helplessness, the intervention of governmental economic and financial management on behalf of Indigenous communities becomes almost expected or even justified.

This is what makes "inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless" so problematic. This register/discourse combination is an important part of the white saviour trope because it points to an embedded belief in the supposed inferiority of the Indigenous people that only emerges through journalists in articles that contrast non-Indigenous against Indigenous people. Beliefs in inferiority and helplessness that require the intervention of non-Indigenous people has largely grown out of the imperial archive, specifically from works such as Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*, which contrasted uncivilized warring savages against civilized white British men.

Of the keywords repeated throughout "inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless," the most common are "government" and "money." Discussions about money and the public and private mismanagement of money on the part of the people of Grassy Narrows was surprisingly common, whether or not fiscal malfeasance or private financial intention was ever actually addressed. This tendency is indicative of the experiential values of the journalists and their beliefs about Indigenous people and financial management.

The \$85-million that the provincial government promised towards cleaning up the river was never intended as reparations directly to the people of Grassy Narrows. It was intended to finance clean-up efforts in the Wabigoon River system, but not as specific

reparations to the community.¹⁷² Yet when it came to representing Indigenous understanding it was represented as such. Bruser chose to include statements on how people in Grassy Narrows could not understand what the money meant, neglecting to clarify in the article that both the provincial and federal governments still had not acted to help the people.

Additionally, it was Moore who chose to depict the people of Grassy Narrows as spending all of their money on alcohol and partying after they were paid. While the focus on money may appear at first to be a factual comment on observed behaviour, it also points to the belief among journalists that Indigenous people have a stereotypical child-like approach to money, much like a child who misspends his allowance. This tendency is the modern representation of Davin's statement that in Indigenous people there is "the helplessness of mind of the child, as well as the practical helplessness."¹⁷³ Here we see the childlike helplessness that is associated with the privileged aspect of the white saviour trope manifest within the language used by journalists.

Multiple registers and discourses

Finally, multiple registers/discourses reveal the multifaceted complexity of the white saviour trope, with each register and discourse combination intersecting and interacting to create a greater textual phenomenon. Phrases containing multiple registers and discourses also make up the majority of the findings included in seventy-eight common phrases expressing two or more registers and discourses.¹⁷⁴

Phrases that contain multiple registers and discourses follow the same patterns and occurrences as those seen in singular registers and discourses, especially the pattern of

¹⁷² Ibid; Reparations to the community was to come in the form of a treatment centre funded by the federal government. At the writing of this thesis, the federal government has yet to act on that promise, citing agreement breakdowns with Grassy Narrows. See Lindsay Richardson and Jamie Pashagumskum, "Grassy Narrows reminds Canada of unkept promises as AFN sets its priority agenda," *APTN: National News*, last modified December 3, 2019.

¹⁷³ Nicolas Flood Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds*, (Ottawa?:s.n., 1879), 11. <http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.03651/1?r=0&s=1>.

¹⁷⁴ See appendix 8

appeals to guilt and guilt responses among readers and journalists. However, the multiple registers revealed another significant entity within the guilt discourse; the government's appearance of and response to guilt, which results in the combination of "privilege/guilt: reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicization."

The most obvious instances of the government's admission and reactions to guilt occurred during the *Toronto Star*'s investigation series into Grassy Narrows. For example, on March 3, 2017, Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray is quoted by journalists Jayme Poisson and David Bruser as saying, "'I think all of us in this House wish we had behaved differently over the last 50 years. I don't think anyone has clean hands here.'"¹⁷⁵ This quote is followed a month-and-a-half later by a lengthier response from the Environment Ministry, again quoted by Poisson and Bruser as part of their investigative series: "...a spokesperson for the provincial Environment Ministry said the government is 'immediately' giving \$2.1 million to fund pre-cleanup studies."¹⁷⁶ These responses from the government are hardly surprising since at this point, over a year into Poisson and Bruser's investigation, not admitting some kind of guilt would only cause more problems and public outcry.

Still, this combination of "privilege/guilt: reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, and government and politicization" is significant. Not only did it occur around the same time that coverage had escalated between 2016 and 2018, it also occurred at the same time there was an increase in letters to the editor, elicited by the ongoing *Star* investigation.

Indeed, "privilege/guilt: reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, and government and politicization" make up the majority of the multiple register/discourse combinations. This combination suggests the interplay between the government's reaction, subsequent news coverage, and letters to the editor is paramount in eliciting and maintaining a societal guilt

¹⁷⁵ Jayme Poisson and David Bruser, "Grassy Narrows chief slams Trudeau," *Toronto Star*, last modified March 3, 2017.

¹⁷⁶ Jayme Poisson and David Bruser, "Provincial budget left out Grassy Narrows, chief says," *Toronto Star*, last modified April 29, 2017.

response. For example, one such letter written by Madeleine Nevins from Markham, Ontario that appeared in the *Toronto Star* on September 27, 2016 is indicative of the reaction among letter-writers during this time:

Why is it that so much money is being spent on so many projects to make Canada a more diverse and equitable place and yet we continue to have Canadians living in deplorable, uninhabitable places such as Grassy Narrows and Attawapiskat? Sending a few counsellors is not the answer. We need to provide these people with proper housing, access to clean drinking water and healthy food. Is the government that ashamed of their inaction that they continue to ignore the plight of these Canadians? Surely rectifying the problem would create great publicity worldwide. As a Canadian I find the lack of progress unconscionable.¹⁷⁷

This letter explicitly calls out the governments' inaction prior to the provincial government promising \$85 million towards cleaning up the river.

The link between readers' appeals and reactions to guilt and the governments' reactions to guilt is similar to the relationship between journalists and readers. As mentioned in the guilt: "reactions and appeals to" section, journalists unconsciously reflect the feelings of the public they serve in times of public outcry. Furthermore, the privileged positions used to politicize the issues at Grassy Narrows by these parties points to a very important component of the white saviour trope. There is a definitive intermingling of white privilege and white guilt that emerges during times of Indigenous crisis.

Indeed, "privilege/guilt: reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, and government and politicization" primarily occurred only at times when there was a non-Indigenous representation, whether the subject of the account was the government, a particular politician, or a non-Indigenous Canadian in general. Journalists played a key role in perpetuating these

¹⁷⁷ Madeleine Nevins, "Injustice swept under the rug," *Toronto Star*, last modified September 27, 2016.

representations through the language they chose to use when writing about and quoting these subjects.

The other side of this relationship is Indigenous representation. As the second-largest multiple register/discourse combination, "inferior/savage: backward, ignorant, helpless, need to save, and combative" occurred twenty-eight times. These combinations often emerged when Indigenous people were compared to non-Indigenous people.

In 1978, for example, the *Globe and Mail*'s Michael Moore wrote the following passage about the partying that occurred in the community following a payday:

But two weekends in a row of fighting, fornicating, drunkenness was enough for a scattering of sober people on this troubled reserve. About a dozen families, which include Chief Simon Fobister and at least two of his band councillors, have revived a plan discussed a couple of years ago: to move four miles away and set up a dry community. [...] They want private lots so they can throw drunks out of their houses, something they cannot do now. They want to return from land an elder says is evil to the good land of their forefathers.¹⁷⁸

While there is a minority who are not depicted poorly, they are instead represented as victims who are seemingly trying to protect themselves from the wild majority. Moore mentions that it was left to the local Ontario Provincial Police detachment to reign in revelry, while the minority, which included the Chief, was left to contemplate abandoning the community.¹⁷⁹ Even, alcoholism and idleness is explicitly identified as the cause for the degradation of the community.¹⁸⁰ There is hope in Chief Simon Fobister's vision, but framed such a way it creates the appearance of Indigenous leadership as helpless, as needing the intervention from

¹⁷⁸ Michael Moore, "THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward," *Globe and Mail*, last modified April 27, 1978.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

non-Indigenous institutions to solve their problems. In this, the sober minority are represented as victims of an “uncivilized” group who also need to be saved from themselves.

There are discourses of “backwardness, need to save, and combativeness” all contained within the above passage. This demonstrates the tendency Moore had to only lean on stereotypical representations in his writing on Indigenous people.

In a more recent example, an Indigenous man is still represented as being uneducated, backward, and ignorant, but there is more of a tendency to attempt to create a sense of empathy or guilt. Published in the *Toronto Star* in 2016 at the beginning of Poisson and Bruser’s investigative series, former chief of Grassy Narrows Steve Fobister is quoted stating, “‘We don’t know science. You look at the lake, it looks good, it looks clean, the fish look all right [...]. How to believe that something like that could turn against you?’”¹⁸¹ Again within this passage evidence points to the insight provided by Geneviève Couchie, that “[journalists] seem to go more verbatim with quotes of Indigenous people.”¹⁸²

To add to this, a 2016 article written by Jim Coyle of the *Toronto Star* focused on Judy Da Silva of Grassy Narrows who took it upon herself to bring the issue of mercury contamination before the UN. As the passage below demonstrates, the article contains all of the key registers and discourses that make up the white saviour trope:

Now [the] environmental health co-ordinator in Grassy Narrows, [Judy Da Silva] said there’s optimism with the election of a federal government promising improved relationships with First Nations. No government has ever fully acknowledged the mercury contamination, she said. No one has apologized. While Da Silva was in Geneva, Wynne apologized. ‘That’s one of

¹⁸¹ Jayme Poisson and David Bruser, “From a ‘way of life’ to poison on their plates,” *Toronto Star*, last modified November 23, 2016.

¹⁸² Geneviève Couchie (resident in Garden Village, Ontario), in discussion with the author, January 2019.

our six original demands that we put out was asking for an apology,' Da Silva said. 'It seems very difficult for them to even do that.'¹⁸³

In this passage there is evidence of "privilege/guilt/ savage/ inferior: reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government, politicization, combative, and backward or ignorant." The government is depicted favourably by Coyle. The government can be interpreted as doing something; while in contrast, the Indigenous person from Grassy Narrows, Da Silva, is endorsing the government's step forward while she is simultaneously represented as being ungrateful, uninformed, and demanding.

Of the keywords repeated throughout, the most common is "government," which was repeated in the multiples category thirty-one times. "Poison" is the second most common and occurred twenty-two times. Other repeated keywords are "action," "activist," "alcohol," "cleanup," "compensation," "eat the fish," "health," "money," "problems," "study," "suffer," "violence," "white," "shame," "inaction," and "death." These keywords are seen throughout the singular instances of the register and discourse combinations. The frequency of these keywords is important in considering the prevalence of journalists' experiential values and the complexity of those values as they emerge through journalists' writings. It should be especially noted that this case study extends over forty years with little fluctuation in these experiential values, as is made evident by the extent and frequency of the keywords.

In the next and final chapter, these findings will be discussed more fully, specifically the implications of the binary oppositions of the keywords identified in each register and discourse section. The intertextual and societal relevance of these findings will also be discussed. In addition, a reworking of the guiding definition of the white saviour trope will be offered, as will a summary answer to each of the guiding questions. Finally, areas for future research will be identified.

¹⁸³ Jim Coyle, "Fighting to clear the poisoned waters," *Toronto Star*, last modified February 28, 2016.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Given the current political and social climate of Canada, and a general interest in post-sesquicentennial reconciliation, identifying the white saviour trope in news media may aid the development of a stronger relationship between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians.

The purpose of this thesis was to determine if the white saviour trope exists in newspaper coverage of mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows between 1977 and 2019. This thesis substantiates the hypothesis that the white saviour trope exists within the language used by journalists who covered a high-profile and decades-long Indigenous issue. The guiding questions in this thesis were also answered with respect to the Grassy Narrows case study. How has the historic use of the white saviour trope embedded itself as a more-or-less routinized, almost subliminal set of received values that stand in as a generally unstated ideology in news media accounts of Indigenous people, usually during times of crisis? How does the trope appear today in the newspaper coverage of Grassy Narrows as a residual imperial discourse? And, in the case of Grassy Narrows, how has the trope been politicized in coverage to create the appearance of doing *something* to alleviate the community's plight? The four registers identified (privilege, guilt, savagery, and inferiority) point to the complexity with which the trope emerges in language, and also how it has remained unchanged from the language used by colonial-era writers. However, it is the associated discourses that reveal how the trope operates through journalists and politicians in an open give-and-take intertextual relationship.

Common keywords were an important part of uncovering the depth of this relationship. It is perhaps not surprising that "government" was the most common keyword in the entire sample of media accounts about the Grassy Narrows mercury crisis given the role the government plays in Indigenous affairs. However, determining exactly what is implied by "government" requires deconstruction. "Government," as a terministic register, points to

either provincial or federal governments, or on a larger scale alludes to the patriarchal systems governing Indigenous peoples as a whole. Yet without context, “government” is utterly meaningless. The word’s frequency may point to the assignment of blame for the state of affairs in Grassy Narrows, or simply that journalists are attempting to keep governments accountable.

Arguably, the frequency of the word’s appearance could connote a larger societal struggle. If this is indeed true, it could point to a greater fear that without government management of Indigenous affairs wild chaos would ensue and the civilizing mission that is baked into the white saviour trope would fail. A Marxist post-colonial theorist such as Frantz Fanon would likely have advocated for such a turn of affairs, especially since he “argues that an entirely new world must come into being to overcome the binary system[...].”¹⁸⁴ Perhaps this is the embedded fear within the white saviour trope that prompts responses around privilege and guilt.

Less controversial words that frequently appeared in the sample are: “contamination,” “study,” “activist,” “commitment,” “shame,” “help,” “suffer,” “money,” “poverty,” “action,” “inaction,” “death,” and “health.” Many of these words are already binary opposites, suggesting that there is indeed some form of a societal struggle in the general narrative surrounding Grassy Narrows. Considering that these keywords appear under the registers and discourses that make up the white saviour trope, this points to the presence of experiential values hidden within the language. Revealing the frequency with which journalists use words like “commitment” and “shame,” “help” and “suffer,” “money” and “poverty,” “action” and “inaction,” and “death” and “health” shows that on some level there is a desire to move

¹⁸⁴ Charles E. Bressler, *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice, Fifth Edition*, (Boston: Longman, 2011), 204.

relations with Indigenous people forward and to release the tension between these binary opposites. This tension is in keeping with the current *zeitgeist*.

However, this tension between binary opposites, past and present coverage, and between groups of people (i.e., journalists and politicians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people) was ripe for exploration. In keeping with Norman Fairclough's three dimensional analytical framework, Julia Kristeva's regard for intertextuality provides a suitable ideologically centred, societal-focused framework to examine the interpersonal tensions between binary opposites, newspaper coverage, and people.

Intertextuality applies to texts that exist in an *open* system that self-perpetuates specific discourses, but such texts are still influenced by outside forces such as societal norms and tensions. According to Kristeva, intertextuality is "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."¹⁸⁵ Moreover, "[a]ll texts, [...], contain within them the ideological structures and struggles expressed in society through discourse."¹⁸⁶ The articles used in the sample, the phrases identified, the key registers and discourses created within them, and even the keywords point to conditions of intertextuality. Indeed, intertextuality is an important part of the white saviour trope in general, as it may be one reason why the trope has existed for so long, and, in part, why it has remained mostly undetected.

Central to this thesis is the idea that the legacy of the British Empire and the ideology of control continue to exert subtle influence on Canada and Canadians through language and within texts. While many of the archaic ideals of control have been dispensed with, the white saviour trope survives due largely to its hidden nature, which is often revealed by journalists when Indigenous people and crisis become the focus of news coverage. While the trope is

¹⁸⁵ Julia Kristeva, "Words, Dialogue and Novel" in *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 36.

¹⁸⁶ Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 36.

only a vestige of a larger ideology, it has survived societal change largely through unchecked repetition.

The depth of the role that the government plays in the cycle of tensions perpetuated through this intertextuality effect is an important phenomenon. Consider the link between the language used by politicians and the journalists' printed accounts wherein there is a tendency for journalists to repeat the tentative promises made by federal and provincial government officials (See: "Privilege: government intervention" in the previous chapter). While there is generally some delay between what the politicians say and what journalists write, the relationship between the two entities demonstrates the intertextual nature of the reporting on Grassy Narrows. This suggests that the spoken and written texts of politicians and journalists do not exist independently but feed into and support one another. This interdependency is in line with the idea that texts contain parts of preceding texts and societal tensions.

Another significant body of evidence that demonstrates the occurrence of intertextuality appears in the similarities in the reporting on Grassy Narrows between 1977 and 1986, and again between 2014 and 2018. One notable similarity between the two timeframes was the lack of suitable Indigenous voices. This is not to say that Indigenous people were not quoted; in fact, at least one Indigenous person was quoted in about half of the articles during each of these timeframes. However, it is worth noting that the Chief was quoted only when his words reinforced or applauded the governments' proposed moves to action.

Reliance on a central "relatable" figure, usually a non-Indigenous person with some amount of stature or privileged access to Indigenous communities, was also common in articles in both timeframes. As has been noted, it is common practice for journalists to focus a story on a person or people that the reader can identify with, whether it is an American aid

worker in Africa or a non-Indigenous activist in Ottawa.¹⁸⁷ In the Grassy Narrows case, Ontario Attorney-General Ian Scott, anthropologist Dr. Anna Shkilnyk, Ontario Premiere David Peterson, and Toronto lawyer John Olthius were common central figures during the first timeframe. In the second timeframe, common central figures were the whistleblower and retired pulp mill labourer Kas Glowacki, environmental activist David Sone, MLA Karla MacFarlane, Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray, writer Vincent Lam, environmental activist David Suzuki, Dr. Donna Mergler, New Democrat MP Charlie Angus, and activist Mark Calzavara. The increase of relatable figures in the second timeframe is likely due to the increase in coverage, especially during *Toronto Star*'s investigation.

However, what this list of central figures reveals is also a reliance on experts to tell the story of contamination in Grassy Narrows. This is not surprising given the primary focus on Grassy Narrows as an environmental disaster, especially during the 2014-18 timeframe. However, the use of experts effectively silenced progressive Indigenous input. While Indigenous perspectives about the contamination were included, they were typically in line with the "savage: need to save," "savage: combative," and "inferior: backward, ignorant, and helpless" registers and discourses. For instance, the passage "locals started noticing something was wrong after fish began floating to the river's surface, turkey vultures started to fly as if drunk and mink and otter disappeared" was published in the *Toronto Star* in 2018 and repeated four times between 2016 to 2018, with the first appearance being in an editorial.¹⁸⁸ However, each time the discourse was used in a news story it was attributed to Judy Da Silva of Grassy Narrows.

In 1978, a similar phrase was used: "Elder Joe Beaver has also described a factor that the planners could not have taken into account: what might best be translated as the aura of

¹⁸⁷ See Matthew W. Hughey, "The Saviour Trope and the Modern Meanings of Whiteness," in *The White Saviour Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).

¹⁸⁸ "Help the community heal," *Toronto Star*, last modified June 4, 2016.

the land. The old site, he has said, radiates a rich, good spirit, while the new site gives off evil.”¹⁸⁹ Again there is a simplistic point of view attributed to the affected Indigenous people, a point of view that is often juxtaposed with that of the educated expert. This is important considering the frequency of the keyword “validity,” and how often non-Indigenous and expert views were considered more valid when it came to the suspected mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows. This tendency is perhaps evident in the persistent calls by the governments for more study on the extent of the contamination, in spite of the continuing claims of poor health by the people of Grassy Narrows.

Contained in these phrases, there is also the tendency to resort to the problematic “Indigenous connection to nature” stereotype. This attribution is problematic because it negates the idea that Indigenous people can care for themselves at the same level as a non-Indigenous person who lives in an urban environment. This narrative emerges despite the fact that the people of Grassy Narrows had the ability to take their case to the Provincial and Supreme Courts in the 1980s, and resident Judy Da Silva took the case before the UN in 2016. Yet community members are still portrayed by journalists as being close to a “state of nature,” or as Eva Mackey put it, “aboriginal people have been seen as closer to nature, a representation which helped to affirm the superiority of western civilization.”¹⁹⁰ Within these two timeframes, there is the juxtaposition of Indigenous peoples’ closer-to-nature state versus the civilized experts who are often used by journalists as relatable, central figures. This tendency does not appear to have changed despite societal change towards awareness of racialization.

There is also a reliance on a victim narrative, which was not a surprising find given the journalists’ tendency to express the perceived helplessness of the people living in Grassy

¹⁸⁹ Michael Moore, “THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward,” *Globe and Mail*, last modified April 27, 1978.

¹⁹⁰ Eva Mackey, “Becoming Indigenous: Land, belonging, and the appropriation of Aboriginality in Canadian Nationalist Narratives,” *Social Analysis* 4, no. 2 (1998): 158.

Narrows. This narrative is closely tied to the guilt register, since portraying people as victims relied heavily on discourses of appeals to guilt. However, this form of guilt was most salient in the letters to the editor, particularly between 2016 to 2018, when the majority of letters focused on condemning the federal government's lack of intervention.

For instance, in a letter to the editor appearing in the *Toronto Star* on February 15, 2017, Randy Gostlin of Oshawa wrote:

I rejoiced at our bringing in Syrian refugees without giving a single thought to what some aboriginal families are enduring daily, like watching their children die because we don't care. It kind of makes one ashamed of being white and Canadian, because this is essentially the doing first of white Europeans and later on white Canadians.¹⁹¹

However, in contrast, there were no letters to the editor between 1977 to 1985 that discussed the contamination of Grassy Narrows, and the victim narrative was almost negligible. It was only between 1983 to 1986 that the guilt register and “reactions and appeals to” discourse emerged in editorials. Not only does this suggest a shift in the *zeitgeist*, it points to the intertextuality between editorials and letters to the editor.

In the 2000s, there is a minor gap between the editorials that started to shift the narrative from helpless savages to helpless victims and the letters to the editor. Between 2016 and 2018, it was very common for an editorial to precede or follow letters to the editor, often within a few days. This acted to concentrate on what was or was not being done to alleviate the suffering in Grassy Narrows.

For instance, four days after the Gostlin's letter appeared in the *Toronto Star*, an editorial was published containing the following statement:

¹⁹¹ Randy Gostlin, "Mercury contamination is our collective sin," *Toronto Star*, last modified February 15, 2017.

Study after study over the decades has shown that generations of people from the two reserves have been poisoned as the province mishandled the file and obfuscated the truth. Indeed, it has taken prodding from scientists, a whistleblower, the persistent pushing of First Nations leaders, an explosive series of stories on the contamination and its effects by the *Star*'s Jayme Poisson and David Bruser and a sharp push from the federal government to finally get action.¹⁹²

The editorial moves the narrative forward in that it creates the sense that something has been done, that the problems faced by Grassy Narrows have been, or are closed to being, solved.

More importantly, the continuance of the guilt register remains. In the preceding letter, there is an appeal to guilt that manifests in attributing shame to being white. In the editorial, there is a response to guilt, expressed by pointing out that some non-Indigenous people are doing something to help and that their help has led to actionable intervention.

Within this editorial, there is also a measure of politicization: the provincial government is discredited; while the federal government is lauded. This has to do with using the problems in Grassy Narrows as a way to demonstrate that the federal government is keeping up with their electoral promises to Indigenous voters.¹⁹³ In other words, the federal government pushed the provincial government into some form of action in attempt to create the notion that they themselves were doing something to rectify the problems faced by the community without really doing anything. This language of political "false-promises" carries

¹⁹² Note: Notice the placement of the "First Nations leaders" in the editorial. Their mention is sandwiched between experts, journalists, and the government, almost creating the sense that they could not have achieved such a victory on their own; "Action, at long last," *Toronto Star*, last modified February 19, 2017.

¹⁹³ In the 2015 federal election, the liberal party leader and electoral candidate Justin Trudeau was adamant about improving conditions on reserves, especially in regard to providing clean water to all communities. During this election, Indigenous voter turnout was the highest it had ever been on reserves at 61.5%, up from 47.4% during the 2011 federal election. See "On-Reserve Voter Turnout – 42nd General Election," *Elections Canada*, August 27, 2018, <https://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/eval/pes2015/ovt&document=index&lang=e>.

into the language used by the journalists in the months following the editorial, especially when the provincial government promised \$85 million to go towards cleaning up the river system. The result is the continuation of the *perception* of fixing the problem.

There are also important differences in stereotypical representation used in the coverage during the two timeframes. For instance, there are fewer stereotypical representations of the Indigenous people of Grassy Narrows in the 2014-18 timeframe. This is primarily noted in the downward shift in the frequency of the mention of alcohol, and a great reduction in attributing idleness to an inherent Indigenous trait. However, some words were simply replaced to be more politically correct. For instance, instead of referring to Indigenous people as “welfare dependent” because there are no jobs, the more accepted term used by current journalists is “joblessness” without any mention of welfare. This is not surprising given the societal shift during the 1990s, most notably seen in the increased education and awareness about racism.

This shift away from overt racism is also reflected in the shift in coverage. Since 2010, the majority of the coverage has focused on social justice issues. This could be explained by the shift in coverage. *Globe and Mail* originally broke the story and reported on Grassy Narrows until 1985. Then the *Toronto Star* took up the mantle and dominated the coverage until April 2019. During this time, the *Star* gained a reputation for social justice, which may explain why the coverage leans that way. It is also worth noting that the *National Post* rarely covered Grassy Narrows at all, meaning that the issue was primarily covered by newspapers considered to be left of centre.

There also tended to be a greater focus on the contamination being a larger Canadian problem instead of strictly an Indigenous one. This suggests another shift in the *zeitgeist*. In earlier reporting, there was a distinct lack of assuming responsibility at the societal level for the problems in Grassy Narrows. Instead, the contamination problem was ascribed to being a

corporate or government problem, and it was therefore their job to rectify the contamination. But it was framed *primarily* as an Indigenous problem that did not have an effect on the general Canadian population. This is perhaps most evident in the lack of citizen involvement in the form of non-Indigenous protests and letters to the editor from southern Ontario.

However, in more recent coverage, the conditions in Grassy Narrows were attributed to lack of collective empathy, ineffective Canadian politics, failing Canadian values, and the abstractly blaming of colonialism as a catch-all, all of which is reflected in the registers and corresponding discourses. In this, there is the tendency to elevate the people's struggle to an epic David and Goliath battle that actually detracts from the issue at hand. Instead, framed in such a way, it ties the solution to the contamination problem to what it means to be a Canadian or what constitutes Canadian society.

At a societal level, therefore, to be confronted with the idea that Canada has a history of oppression, genocide, and racialization has had a profound impact on what it means to be Canadian. From the position of morality, such revelations have led to questions on how journalists should cover Indigenous issues, and how the Canadian public processes the information it is confronted with. In the age of reconciliation, which some Indigenous scholars insist is a non-Indigenous societal and political concept, the ripples emanating from revealed truths are great weights to place on a society that has long operated on the perceived superiority over those who have been dominated since settlers first arrived.

By exploring five key narratives that facilitate the continuation of Eurocentric political and societal powers, while simultaneously struggling with a sense of guilt and privilege, elements of the societal struggle come into focus.

Within the societal analysis, *how* the white saviour trope now operates as a politicized tool in the current age of reconciliation is centrally important. Also important is the frame or

discussion, which mobilizes Jeff Corntassel's writing on "Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and community approaches to reconciliation."

First, the coverage of Grassy Narrows in the age of truth and reconciliation perpetuates many of the same registers and discourses as seen between 1977 and 1986 (especially with respect to political promises and inaction) with only slight shifts in how journalists express their experiential values in keeping with the political correctness of the time. This is not surprising since, as Corntassel puts it, the common notion about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people put forth by journalists and politicians "allows political leaders and settler populations to deal with residual guilt on their own terms."¹⁹⁴ These terms "often follow all too familiar scripts of 'forgiving and forgetting,' 'moving on from the past,' and 'unifying as a country,' all the while brushing aside any deeper discussions of restitution or justice."¹⁹⁵ Evidence of this is seen in the coverage of Grassy Narrows, especially in discourses related to guilt and reliance on common Canadian values of fairness, equality, and helpfulness.

However, it is the political language used during the coverage and the politicization of the issues faced by Grassy Narrows that speaks loudly about reconciliation efforts. Primarily, such language suggests that reconciliation has become "a way for the dominant culture to reinscribe the status quo rather than to make amends for previous injustices."¹⁹⁶ The coverage of Grassy Narrows is a prime example of this reaffirmation of the status quo, especially on the part of journalists, since they often repeat and reaffirm insincere political promises.

Although the *Toronto Star* journalists who conducted the investigation into mercury contamination between 2016 and 2018 did well at challenging and holding the government

¹⁹⁴ Jeff Corntassel, "Indigenous storytelling, truth-telling, and community approaches to reconciliation." *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 35, no. 1 (March 2009): 144.

<http://www.corntassel.net/IndigenousStorytelling%202009.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

accountable for the state of the contamination in Grassy Narrows. Yet, the fact that their coverage eased once political promises were made for restitution confirms Corntassel's argument. This is especially true since nothing has changed in Grassy Narrows. However, in agreement with Corntassel, some level of guilt has been eased by creating the appearance of having done something. Since the registers and discourses discussed in this thesis suggest an overlap between politicians, journalists, and the non-Indigenous Canadian public, this tendency to ease concern and coverage are perhaps symptomatic of a greater societal experiential value about Indigenous people.

Secondly, this societal experiential value and obvious management of the status quo are perhaps best expressed by decisions made by journalists on who is to be included in a news story, and what they will say. As the registers and discourse findings suggest, especially with respect to “privilege: speaking on behalf of,” the inclusion of identified needs and wants of the people of Grassy Narrows was often disregarded in favour of the political and dominant institutional narrative. This narrative is often expressed through politicians, scientists, aid workers, and environmentalists, who speak on behalf of the Indigenous people as to what they believe the people’s needs are. The narrative is then disseminated to the public by journalists through careless reporting. In the majority of the articles in the Grassy Narrows case study, the needs, desires, and wants of Indigenous people are disregarded unless they follow the dominant narrative put forth by politicians.

This is central to the inquiry in Corntassel’s article. In the case of the TRC, Corntassel argues that the TRC disregards the actual concerns of Indigenous people, especially of those whose concerns are outside of the dominant narrative. Through interviews in which participants “re-story” their wants and desires, as well as their histories, Corntassel finds “that there was no room within the current TRC process for a community perspective to be really

heard.”¹⁹⁷ In other words, Corntassel found that the participants did not feel heard or even considered in current reconciliation efforts, and insists that Indigenous people’s realities are not the focal point of “state-based reconciliation efforts.”¹⁹⁸ Journalists who only stick to the main narrative of Indigenous concerns as laid out by governments are not fairly representing Indigenous people in their reporting.

Considering Grassy Narrows, and what the registers and discourses point to, the issues have largely been ill addressed or even ignored, simply because they didn’t fit into the dominant narrative. This is in spite of the years of protest from the Chiefs and people of Grassy Narrows.

Third, there was often the negation of effective coverage of those in the community who brought the case before the Supreme Court, the UN, and who protested for themselves and on behalf of their community before Parliament. Instead, within editorials and letters to the editor the work of environmentalists, non-Indigenous protestors, and journalists was widely praised. While there was some mention of those in the community who were fighting, Judy Da Silva being one of them, these people were depicted in such a way as to reinforce the ideas and narrative of inferiority and helplessness, and often mentioned only in context with non-Indigenous people.

Corntassel suggests that Indigenous people re-storying their reality allows not only a way for communities to connect, but also offers an “alternative narrative to state-centred reconciliation presented by the TRC.”¹⁹⁹ Within journalism, especially in the case of Grassy Narrows, such a space does not yet exist without influence from the dominant society.

Fourth, promises of help while the problem goes unsolved is central to the white saviour trope, and, as we are beginning to understand, is largely a tool used by the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 148.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 147.

government that is then disseminated through the work of journalists. Although Corntassel does not specifically examine questionable promises, his article does demonstrate the tendency to focus on specific aspects of a problem as identified by the government, while simultaneously ignoring what Indigenous people really want. For example, by recognizing that the TRC negates issues of land, Indigenous family care, and the impact of financial restitution, Corntassel shows that Indigenous realities and voices are often silenced in favour of a narrative that ensures “the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption.”²⁰⁰

Finally, this is perhaps most evident in the letters to the editor and editorials, in which there is a tendency to perpetuate the idea that it is the federal and provincial governments’ responsibility to save the people of Grassy Narrows. It is a sentiment echoed by journalists who mimic such language, and then fail to provide accurate follow-up coverage. If the white saviour trope did not exist, and Indigenous people were given the space to speak for their own needs at the same level as the dominant narrative, then “the Settler’s power” would be reduced or non-existent. Instead, narratives like those supported by the white saviour trope act by “inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and [by] imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome or perspective on [Settler’s] power.”²⁰¹ In essence, the white saviour trope acts to prevent any kind of meaningful reconciliation that equally benefits Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

In conclusion, as the findings suggest, current newspaper coverage of Indigenous people and issues in Canada is stuck in a self-contained, self-perpetuating language and meaning loop that perpetually infers that Indigenous people are incapable of addressing their own concerns and finding suitable solutions without government intervention. As Philip

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 139.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Goulais of Nipissing First Nations put it, there is an insistence that Indigenous people need “The Great White Father.” Over-reliance on the white saviour trope has led to journalists unknowingly problematizing specific Indigenous issues that fit with current political goals. At the same time, they continue to silence Indigenous people and ignore their larger concerns and proposed, culture-centric solutions.

Unlike the coverage of the Attawapiskat housing crisis examined during my previous research, conditions in Grassy Narrows have never been labelled as “in crisis” by the news media and politicians. This is especially vexing given the number of years the community has struggled with the effects of mercury contamination. Outside of a crisis scenario, the emergence of the white saviour trope was not expected to emerge with such sustained frequency.

The findings also support the opinions voiced by Steve Bonspiel, Phil Goulais, and Genevieve Couchie: that Indigenous people are regarded as “Others” who should be feared and avoided, or civilized and shown the *proper* way to live. This is, of course, an anachronistic view of people who are simply trying to survive in a world that seemingly does not believe in their abilities.

While it may be the mandate of solutions journalism to draw the public’s attention to Indigenous success stories, the danger of perpetuating the white saviour trope exists. There is also the problem of deciding who will be empowered to prescribe solutions, and who will actually benefit from such interventions. Steve Bonspiel, a journalist and newspaper editor, has said that the problems with Indigenous representation in the media are really multi-tiered:

Your politicians are failing you because they’re not telling you the truth, and they’re not standing up for the treaties, [...]. You have the teachers who don’t know, who don’t teach the proper things [...], and you have the journalists who

don't spend enough time, who don't know enough, who don't do their research,
and then everywhere in between.²⁰²

In Bonspiel's view, journalists are left to teach themselves about Indigenous people and communities, even if it means going to the communities on their own time, reading websites created by band offices, following issues and people on Facebook, or just reaching out to the community and asking questions about things they are not knowledgeable about.²⁰³ He says that it is important for journalists to remember that "you're not just going to be journalists for the mainstream, not just going to be journalists for the non-native people, you've got to be a journalist for everybody, natives included."²⁰⁴

Phil Goulais echoes Bonspiel's advice. As to people's, especially journalists', tendency to avoid Indigenous communities and people out of fear, Goulais insisted that there is no reason to be fearful of Indigenous people:

It's not that scary, it's not that complicated. You make an appointment, you bang on their door, and have a cup of tea. Sometimes it takes three cups, but you eventually get things rolling, but you do what you have to do. First, second, and sometimes third visit before people get a trust for one another and name to a face and it's just normal.²⁰⁵

This idea that Indigenous people and communities are to be feared and avoided is another old notion stemming from colonization, from the idea of savages and an uncivilized wilderness. This is a fundamental component of the continuance of the white saviour trope, because by continuing to act as though Indigenous people are to be feared, non-Indigenous people are reinforcing the narrative that Indigenous people are somehow lesser beings, that they are a

²⁰² Steve Bonspiel (The Eastern Door editor), in discussion with the author, October 2018.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Philip Goulais (Nipissing First Nation) in discussion with the author, January 2019.

group that needs to be managed by the civilized people who then purport to know the best way for everyone to live.

Finally, from the findings presented in this thesis, the definition of the white saviour trope needs to be adjusted. The white saviour trope, when used by Canadian journalists and expressed in Canadian newspapers, is a normative practice that manifests as part of an ideological discourse that can be traced to the British Imperial era when Indigenous peoples were depicted in literature, correspondence, and newspapers as savage and helpless. The trope is a modernist discourse that circulates within registers of privilege, guilt, inferiority, and savagery in the coverage of Indigenous people. It is a form of “the common sense” that is focused on the self-interest of the dominant society by creating the illusion of correcting a widely publicized issue, and permits people to feel good (charitable) while simultaneously problematizing specific Indigenous issues, politicizing those issues, and effectively silencing Indigenous people. And when manifested over a long period of time, the trope prevents the core concerns and issues of Indigenous people and communities to come to light, and acts in the maintenance of an unequal power balance. This new definition differs in that it includes the four main registers that have been identified, the problematizing and politicization of Indigenous issues, the silencing of Indigenous people, and the long term effect of the trope. While the revised definition is far from simple, further work and research will refine it.

The politicization of the issues in Grassy Narrows is problematic in its own right, especially since it has led to “reconciliation” becoming, increasingly, a token word used by politicians. Politicization has allowed the contamination at Grassy Narrows to fester for decades without suitable intervention and tailored health care for those suffering the effects of mercury poisoning. Examining other communities with similar issues who are not in “crisis” may show that the emergence of the white saviour trope is not confined to the case of Grassy

Narrows. In this endeavour, the four registers can be used as a type of framework or methodology to reveal the trope.

Ongoing research of the news coverage of recent Indigenous issues in Canada will be instrumental in tracking the continued evolution of the white saviour trope. Extending the exploration beyond Canada would also be enlightening. Examining news coverage of Indigenous people in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and other places where the Imperial archive pertains, may determine if such news coverage contains similar patterns. Such an examination will strengthen the argument that the trope is derived primarily from colonialism and is not just a Canadian phenomenon.

This research may provide journalists and editors with ideas on how to craft future stories in such a way that refrains from drawing on the trope. Recognizing that Indigenous people are capable of shaping their own futures may encourage more journalists to reach out to Indigenous people about issues that concern them. More specifically, journalists may be more aware of the need to better balance stories with Indigenous voices.

In the theoretical realm, the white saviour trope may be useful in critical analysis of Indigenous policies and policy proposals that aim to correct some perceived problems. Policies such as those that govern land and housing, and even the Indian Act itself, may contain aspects of the trope. Revealing the trope at work within policy development and documentation will help destabilize lingering colonial legacies.

The white saviour trope is an intriguing concept laden with issues of power, domination, and ideology. Philosophically, it requires a deep level of critical analysis. Its persistence across many sense-making platforms may reveal a deep look into the psyche of colonialism and into our own nature.

This thesis points to an indication that the white saviour operates as a type of common sense, but the routinization of practices deriving from a historically grounded ideology needs to be investigated and unpacked more fully. This is especially crucial given that we are on the cusp of a greater awareness of Indigenous people and their cultures, mainly facilitated through formal education, transitioning institutional awareness, and a general growing interest in Indigenous people.²⁰⁶

If journalists can challenge the white saviour trope, slowly change the discourse at one level, and overcome the inevitable resistance, then the ripples will be felt within politics and society as a whole. By consciously doing away with the white saviour trope, journalists can provoke change and help to bring Canada out from under the shadow of colonialism.

²⁰⁶ This last point is anecdotally identified by my husband who informally educates military members and others on Ojibwe and First Nations culture, systemic racism, and the problems with the current systems. I have also found similar interest from undergraduate students at Concordia when I have guest lectured on some of my research.

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Appendix 1: Privilege: government and politicization

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	program, benefit, government	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	31 Dec 1982	N/A	"Ontario, Whitedog band reach compensation pact"
Privilege	government and politicization	pitiful, visiting politicians, government	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Sep 1983	N/A	"Forgotten victims"
Privilege	government and politicization	believes, liability, damages, proven	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	06 Jun 1984	Christie McLaren	"Indians are angered by delay in mercury pollution payment"
Privilege	government and politicization	improving on its own, levels, debatable	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 May 1985	Kathleen Kenna	"15 years after ban on commercial fishing northern Indians say they feel 'hopeless'"
Privilege	government and politicization	money, self-sufficient, government, responsible	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	26 Nov 1985	Rudy Platiel	"Compensation for mercury pollution Indians offered \$16.7 million settlement"
Privilege	government and politicization	province, warned, eating fish, issue, claims	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Dec 1985	Rudy Platiel	"Settlement greeted with mixed feelings, restraint"
Privilege	government and politicization	independent, justice, respect, participation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	17 Aug 1992	CP	"Judge gives Ojibwa band say in sentence of its ex-chief"
Privilege	government and politicization	accused, justice, native involvement	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	16 Sep 1992	N/A	"FIRST COLUMN Study in contrasts"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	problem, solutions, government, ownership	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	10 Sep 1993	Rudy Platiel	"New solution to solvent abuse urged Inquest studies gasoline-sniffing epidemic among natives"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, fund, help	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Privilege	government and politicization	research, symptoms, contamination, alcoholism	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Jul 2008	Dennis Bueckert	"Mercury contamination issue back ; 30 years later, disease signs present in Indians Health Canada funds new study in Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	concerns, government, responsibility, claim, contamination, under control, data, report, problem	<i>Toronto Star</i>	07 Apr 2010	Tanya Talaga	"McGuinty to study mercury contamination report Research conflicts with federal claims about Grassy Narrows reserve, premier says"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, study, responsibility	<i>Toronto Star</i>	08 Apr 2010	Anonymous	"Grassy Narrows, again"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, report, safe, food, hope, solution, eat the fish, advisory	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Jun 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Mercury contamination lingering, study shows"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	apology, abuses, government, refusal, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	02 Jun 2016	Chris Cosby	"Premier Wynne and First Nations"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, response	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jun 2016	Editor	"Help the community heal"
Privilege	government and politicization	shameful, study, complicit, health, crisis, contamination, experts	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jun 2016	Editor	"Help the community heal"
Privilege	government and politicization	pressure, government, study, solutions	<i>Toronto Star</i>	06 Jun 2016	Simon Fobister Sr. (Chief of Grassy Narrows at that time)	"Grassy Narrows must be cleaned up now"
Privilege	government and politicization	politician visiting, government, plan, issue, contamination, money, sampling	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jul 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"MPP urged cleanup of mercury - in 1984"
Privilege	government and politicization	visiting politician, government, funding, promised, suffer	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"From a 'way of life' to poison on their plates"
Privilege	government and politicization	committed, power, clean up, government, act in contradiction, action, situation, worse	<i>Toronto Star</i>	25 Nov 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Province vague on plans for contaminated river's cleanup"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, responsibility, health, treat, well-being	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	02 Jan 2017	Gloria Galloway	"Grassy Narrows chief urges PM to start river cleanup"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	government, responsibility, jurisdiction, government	<i>Toronto Star</i>	14 Jan 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Province vows a review of mercury-tainted soil tests"
Privilege	government and politicization	responsible, report, government, work together	<i>Toronto Star</i>	17 Jan 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Feds vow to fix Grassy Narrows 'once and for all'"
Privilege	government and politicization	committed, contamination, action plan, government, unequivocally, partners	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	14 Feb 2017	Allison Jones	"Ontario to do more mercury tests at Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	impact, addressed, government, committed, plan, work together	<i>Toronto Star</i>	14 Feb 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ontario commits to clean up mercury at Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, compensation, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	03 Mar 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ontario commits to clean up mercury at Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	right thing, government, commitment, promise	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Jun 2017	Editor	"Cleanup, at last"
Privilege	government and politicization	progress, government, healthy, strong, prosperous, solutions, jurisdictional, progress, issues	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Nov 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows seeks \$4.5M care facility for mercury victims"
Privilege	government and politicization	support, government, study, committed, right thing	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Nov 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows seeks \$4.5M care facility for mercury victims"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	needs, timeline, government	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ottawa pledges to help build care home in Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	promise, government, commitment, assess, impacts, needs, contamination, help	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ottawa pledges to help build care home in Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	study, government, suffering, contamination, support	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2017	Editor	"Treatment, at last"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, election, jurisdictional, act, help, do something, contamination, eating fish, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	22 May 2018	Rob Ferguson	"NDP pledges more help for Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	government and politicization	government, money, cleanup, experts, pledge, clean up, research, help	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Dec 2018	David Bruser	"Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children"
Privilege	government and politicization	issue, situation, government, do something	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Mar 2019	Alex Ballingall	"PM says he's sorry he snubbed protesters"
Privilege	government and politicization	reconciliation, government, concerns, poisoned, elite	<i>National Post</i>	29 Mar 2019	Matt Gurney	"PM scores direct hit on own brand; Barbs at Grassy Narrows protesters"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	government and politicization	government, promise, honour	<i>Toronto Star</i>	02 Apr 2019	Karen Wendling, associate professor in the department of philosophy at the University of Guelph.	"Liberals must keep promise to Grassy Narrows"

Appendix 2: Privilege: exploitation and taking advantage of coverage

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	crisis, suicides, gas, government, validity	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	12 Jan 1983	Ken MacQueen	"Ottawa is blamed for near-collapse of Indian reserve"
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	activist, protest, blockade,	<i>National Post</i>	14 Jul 2006	Patrick Kelly	"Native activists block Trans-Canada Highway: Grassy Narrows Reserve"
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	expert, contamination, government, tragically, resisted, justice, act, relationship	<i>Toronto Star</i>	01 Jun 2016	David Suzuki	"Cleaning up mercury a must in Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	promise, government, commitment, foundation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	25 Nov 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Province vague on plans for contaminated river's cleanup"
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	contamination, report	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Jan 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Tainted soil discovered near Grassy Narrows"
Privilege	exploitation and taking advantage of coverage	validity, government, advocate, allegation, investigation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Jan 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Tainted soil discovered near Grassy Narrows"

Appendix 3: Privilege: speaking on behalf of and who benefits

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	province, government, deterioration, eat the fish, food, health, tourism, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	06 Apr 1982	Rudy Platiel	"Indians get more roadblocks over mercy pollution claims"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	compensation, life, death, white	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	12 Jan 1983	Ken MacQueen	"Ottawa is blamed for near-collapse of Indian reserve"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	way of life, tradition, government, destroy, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	12 Jan 1983	Ken MacQueen	"Ottawa is blamed for near-collapse of Indian reserve"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	brave, hero, easy, change, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Dec 1985	Rudy Platiel	"Grassy Narrows hoping to escape its troubled past"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	visiting activist, development, human rights, harm	<i>Toronto Star</i>	19 Apr 2007	Alex Neve is secretary general of Amnesty International Canada	"Protecting native land and rights"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	purge, reporter, book, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	06 Apr 2010	Richard J. Brennan	"Nightmare of mercury contamination returns; Study says reserve's diet of polluted fish worse than it was 40 years ago"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	province, suffered, imposed, land, court	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Mar 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Ontario agrees to stop logging"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	victory, respect, reserve, right, government, fail	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Mar 2014	Raveena Aulakh	"Giant lumber firm vows to stay clear of Grassy Narrows reserve"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	report, government, negligent, contamination, publicly supports, non-profit	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jul 2014	Tanya Talaga	"Report on contamination kept hidden, claims First Nations group"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	recommended, studies, research, remedies	<i>Toronto Star</i>	25 Nov 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Province vague on plans for contaminated river's cleanup"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	writers, concern, rights, territory, livelihood	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	01 Dec 2016	Vincent Lam, Miriam Toews, Margaret Atwood	"Prospering while cherishing the land"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	commitment, journalists, contamination, action, government, activism, mothers	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jun 2017	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	visiting activist, concerns, government, commitment, clean up	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jun 2017	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	legacy, mistreatment, government, industry, traditional, way of life	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2017	Stephen Bede Scharper and Annamaria Enenajor	"Grassy Narrows contamination a crime against humanity?"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	demand, traditional, neglect, destruction, failure, government, rights	<i>Toronto Star</i>	10 Oct 2018	David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows First Nation declares sovereignty over land"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	activist, protest, government, on behalf of	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	29 Mar 2019	Bill Curry	"PM scores direct hit on own brand; Barbs at Grassy Narrows protesters"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	activist, plotting, protest, social media	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Mitch Potter	"Trudeau's encounter with Grassy Narrows activists was months in the making"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	arrogance, government, nonpartisan	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Mitch Potter	"Trudeau's encounter with Grassy Narrows activists was months in the making"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	government, arrogance, justice, doing the right thing, suffering, victims, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Mitch Potter	"Trudeau's encounter with Grassy Narrows activists was months in the making"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	government, issue, arrogance, history, ignored, blame, apology, action	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Mitch Potter	"Trudeau's encounter with Grassy Narrows activists was months in the making"
Privilege	speaking on behalf of and who benefits	on behalf of, protesters	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Mitch Potter	"Trudeau's encounter with Grassy Narrows activists was months in the making"

Appendix 4: Savage: need to save

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage	need to save	forefathers, white, alcohol	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Savage	need to save	idleness, alcohol	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Savage	need to save	self-help, self-pride, drunks, evil, forefathers	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Savage	need to save	sober, drunk, ownership, reserve, land	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Savage	need to save	welfare, work, province, government, money, help, change	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Savage	need to save	poverty, health, social upheaval, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	06 Jun 1984	Christie McLaren	"Indians are angered by delay in mercury pollution payment"
Savage	need to save	belief, eating the fish, health	<i>Toronto Star</i>	01 Dec 1985	Paul Bilodeau	"Indian bands look to a better future"
Savage	need to save	gas sniffing, economic, plight, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Jul 1991	John Duncanson	"Mental tests planned in shooting"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage	need to save	blockage, traditional, lands, ravaging, rights, human rights	<i>Toronto Star</i>	19 Apr 2007	Alex Neve is secretary general of Amnesty International Canada	"Protecting native land and rights"
Savage	need to save	lawsuit, development, traditional, lands, struggle, way of life, contaminated destroyed	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Mar 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Ontario agrees to stop logging"
Savage	need to save	eat the fish, afford, buy	<i>Toronto Star</i>	24 Jul 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"A poisoned people"
Savage	need to save	work, industries, jobs, plagued, problems, poverty, alcoholism, addiction, suicides	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Feb 2018	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels"
Savage	need to save	legacy, colonials, health, well-being	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Dec 2018	David Bruser	"Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children"

Appendix 5: Savage: combative

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage	combative	treaty, rights, violence	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	01 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"Hartt to urge splitting inquiry, wants to oversee Indian talks"
Savage	combative	government, visit, dominant society, exploit, white, deny, right, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Denis Harrington	"Peterson honored as natives celebrate end of pollution case"
Savage	combative	self-pity, white, rules and regulations, stay away	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Nov 1986	Susan Reid	"Indian woman clings to her traditions Scoffs at compensation as answer to Whitedog's problems"
Savage	combative	death, armed, occupation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	27 Jul 1998	Jim Rankin	"Police chief on trial in Ojibwa's death"
Savage	combative	infuriated	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Savage	combative	get out, territory, damage, destroy	<i>National Post</i>	14 Jul 2006	Patrick Kelly	"Native activists block Trans-Canada Highway: Grassy Narrows Reserve"
Savage	combative	protest, efforts, to deal with	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Jun 2007	Rob Ferguson	"Native protest tests new ministry; Teepee at Legislature puts focus on logging, mineral exploration"
Savage	combative	descended, contamination	<i>National Post</i>	07 Apr 2010	Mike Barber	"Mercury contamination years after rivers 'safe'; First Nations"
Savage	combative	pounced, negotiate	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Jul 2014	Vincent Donovan	"Top court rejects First Nation's logging appeal"
Savage	combative	resist	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Jul 2014	Vincent Donovan	"Top court rejects First Nation's logging appeal"
Savage	combative	frustrated, demanded, help, experts	<i>Toronto Star</i>	22 Jun 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Team of scientists will investigate mercury dumping claim"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage	combative	crisis, declaration	<i>Toronto Star</i>	10 Oct 2018	David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows First Nation declares sovereignty over land"

Appendix 6: Guilt: reactions and appeals to

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	brutalizing, rot, intervention, self-determination	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Sep 1983	N/A	"Forgotten victims"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	joblessness, horrendous, happiness, despair, alcohol, violence, suicide, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	31 Dec 1984	N/A	"Indecent delay"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	legal, damages, credible, social conscience	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	31 Dec 1984	N/A	"Indecent delay"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	settlement, lost, pride, self determination, livelihood	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Nov 1985	David Israelson	"Indians get \$16 million mercury settlement"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	predictions, damage, thankful	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Nov 1985	N/A	"Mercury's victims"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	lawsuit, concerns, destroyed, way of life, legal, nothing	<i>Toronto Star</i>	06 Apr 2000	Brian McAndrew	"Band members sue to shut down logging ; Province, Abitibi 'destroying our way of life'"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	died, end, terrible, death	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	health, death	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	older, lost, cause, fights	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	health, problems, legacy, unemployment	<i>Toronto Star</i>	07 Apr 2010	Tanya Talaga	"McGuinty to study mercury contamination report Research conflicts with federal claims about Grassy Narrows reserve, premier says"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	injustice, health, problems, unemployment, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	07 Apr 2010	Tanya Talaga	"McGuinty to study mercury contamination report Research conflicts with federal claims about Grassy Narrows reserve, premier says"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	findings, struggle, action, shock, evidence	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	05 Jun 2012	Michelle McQuigge	"Decades later, mercury contamination lingers"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	still eat fish, food security	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Jun 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Mercury contamination lingering, study shows"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	international attention	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jul 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Report on contamination kept hidden, claims First Nations group"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	disheartened, hurtful, health, do not matter	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Dec 2014	Raveena Aulakh	"Grassy Narrows denied assessment on clear-cutting"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	issues, wounds	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	16 Jun 2015	Editor	"And in the water"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	lifeblood, culture, tragedy, crisis, employment	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Feb 2016	Jim Coyle	"Fighting to clear the poisoned waters"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	shameful, crisis, experts, international attention	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jun 2016	Editor	"Help the community heal"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	inaction, conflicted, poverty, inhumane, safe, health issues, do nothing, suicides, equity, suffer, not direct cause	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Jun 2016	Beatrice Cleary, North York	"Act now on Grassy Narrows"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	proud	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Jun 2016	Ron Gibbens, Richmond Hill	"Act now on Grassy Narrows"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	racism, harm, neglect	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Jun 2016	Stephen Bede Scharper, a fellow of Trinity College, teaches environmental studies at the University of Toronto.	"Grassy Narrows mercury disaster a form of environmental racism"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	breakdowns, upheaval, suicide	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	21 Sep 2016	Keith Leslie	"Governments must commit to mercury cleanup, chief says"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	shameful, fight, help, commitment, province	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	21 Sep 2016	Keith Leslie	"Governments must commit to mercury cleanup, chief says"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	contamination, marginalized, money, resources, fight, racism	<i>Toronto Star</i>	27 Sep 2016	Jennifer Spalton, Toronto	"Injustice swept under the rug"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	expert, happening, contamination, unequivocal, province	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"From a 'way of life' to poison on their plates"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	hardships, suffered	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	02 Jan 2017	Gloria Galloway	"Grassy Narrows chief urges PM to start river cleanup"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	deception, justice, help, cleaned up, problem, health	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Nov 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ontario knew about Grassy Narrows mercury for decades, but kept it secret"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	toxic, risk	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Nov 2017	Cynthia Bragg, Guelph	"Pressuring province over toxic issues"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	harm, traditions, stark, rights	<i>Toronto Star</i>	24 May 2018	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Mercury's heavy toll on Grassy Narrows"
Guilt	reactions to and appeals to guilt	youth, obstacles, legacies, colonialism, battle, fairness	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Dec 2018	David Bruser	"Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children"

Appendix 7: Inferior: backward or ignorant

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Inferior	backward or ignorant	government, eat the fish, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	08 Dec 1977	Victor Malarek	“Stephenson to get data on mercury in Indians' bodies”
Inferior	backward or ignorant	metaphysics, spirit, evil	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward”
Inferior	backward or ignorant	money, drunk	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward”
Inferior	backward or ignorant, hopeless, and helplessness	catastrophe, belief, hopelessness	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	23 Mar 1985	M T Kelly	"A community in destruction A POISON STRONGER THAN LOVE”
Inferior	backward or ignorant, and helpless	money, confused, jobs, work	<i>Toronto Star</i>	10 Nov 1986	Susan Reid	"Plans and cash replace despair of Ojibwa bands”
Inferior	backward or ignorant	disruptive, reserve, clan system, homes, European-style	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	“Grassy Narrows, still fighting’
Inferior	helpless	spearheaded, women, protest, macho, land, disputes	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Kate Harries	“Grassy Narrows, still fighting’
Inferior	backward or ignorant	responsible, report	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Jun 2012	Tanya Talaga	"Mercury contamination lingering, study shows”
Inferior	backward or ignorant	prove, government, message, strong	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Feb 2016	Jim Coyle	"Fighting to clear the poisoned waters”

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Inferior	backward or ignorant, and helpless	ban, tradition, way of life, food insecurity, eating the fish	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jun 2016	Editor	"Help the community heal"
Inferior	backward or ignorant, and helpless	government, compensation, promises, money	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Jun 2017	David Bruser	"Suzuki visits Grassy Narrows"
Inferior	backward or ignorant	drunk, disappeared	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Feb 2018	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels"

Appendix 8: Multiple

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Guilt/ Politicalization	reactions to, appeals to guilt, and tokenism	government, contamination, precious	<i>Toronto Star</i>	09 Apr 2010	Murray D. Lumley, Toronto	"Consequences of mercury contamination"
Guilt/ Privilege	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, speaking on behalf of, and who benefits	grateful, investigation, government, plight, poisoned, livelihood	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Nov 2017	Cynthia Bragg, Guelph	"Pressuring province over toxic issues"
Guilt/ Privilege	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, speaking on behalf of, and who benefits	government, protest, white privilege, poisoned, study	<i>National Post</i>	02 Apr 2019	Walter Tedman	"Prime insult to Grassy Narrows protester"
Guilt/Inferior	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, backward, and ignorant	violated, government	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Feb 2018	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels"
Guilt/Inferior	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, backward, and ignorant	intelligence, compensation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Feb 2018	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels"
Guilt/Inferior/ Politicalization	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, backward, ignorant, tokenism (tokenism as a political act)	white, different, wiped out, self destruction, romanticizing	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	23 Mar 1985	M T Kelly	"A community in destruction A POISON STRONGER THAN LOVE"
Inferior/ Patriarchy	backward or ignorant, helpless, and government intervention	handouts, government, hope	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Inferior/ Savage	backward or ignorant, helpless, and combative	violence, alcohol, gas sniffing, refusing, traditional lifestyle	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Nov 1986	Regina Hickl-Szabo	"Gangs rape young women on reserve, chief tells MPPs"
Inferior/ Savage	backward or ignorant, helpless, and combative	fighting, drunk, troubled, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Susan Reid	"Indian woman clings to her traditions Scoffs at compensation as answer to Whitedog's problems"
Inferior/ Savage	backward or ignorant, helpless, and combative	drunk	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	23 Sep 1983	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows seeks \$4.5M care facility for mercury victims"
Inferior/ Savage	backward or ignorant, and combative	demand	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Nov 2017	Denis Harrington	"Peterson's now 'Me See Way Kijik'"
Inferior/Savage	backward or ignorant, and need to save	government, visiting politician, dance	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Rob Ferguson	"Native protest tests new ministry; Teepee at Legislature puts focus on logging, mineral exploration"
Inferior/Savage	backward or ignorant, and need to save	suffering, unemployment, devastated	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Jun 2007	Paul Bilodeau	"Indian bands look to a better future"
Patriarchy/ Savage	government intervention, need to save	eating the fish, unpolluted, government	<i>Toronto Star</i>	01 Dec 1985	Karen Wendling, associate professor in the department of philosophy at the University of Guelph.	"Liberals must keep promise to Grassy Narrows"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/ Inferior	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and backward or ignorant	claims, government, report, uneducated	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jul 2014	Michael Moore	"Hartt to urge splitting inquiry, wants to oversee Indian talks"
Privilege/ Guilt:	government, politicalization, reactions to guilt, and appeals to guilt	promise, money, protesting, death, apology, government, fix, problem, election, needs, money, compensation, fight	<i>Toronto Star</i>	02 Apr 2019	Susan Reid	"Plans and cash replace despair of Ojibwa bands"
Privilege/ Guilt:	government, politicalization, reactions to guilt, and appeals to guilt	response, action, money, clean up, compensate, fifty years, immediately	<i>Toronto Star</i>	02 Apr 2019	Michael Moore	"Hartt to urge splitting inquiry, wants to oversee Indian talks"
Privilege/ Patriarchy	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and government intervention	money, land, employment, self-sufficient, government money, reserve, traditionally	<i>Toronto Star</i>	10 Nov 1986	Bill Curry	"PM apologizes for remarks to Grassy Narrows activists"
Privilege/ Patriarchy	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and government intervention	report, pro-Indian, liaison	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	01 Apr 1978	Editor	"Help the community heal"
Privilege/ Privilege	government, politicalization, and speaking on behalf of	activist, protest, government, on behalf of	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	29 Mar 2019	Rudy Platiel	"Compensation for mercury pollution Indians offered \$16.7 million settlement"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/ Privilege	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, government, and politicalization	utopian, proposal, government, treaties, resources	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	01 Apr 1978	Gloria Galloway	"Chief Fought For Justice For A People Poisoned By Mercury"
Privilege/ Privilege	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, government, and politicalization	concerned, marched, crisis, government, slow, action, listen	<i>Toronto Star</i>	04 Jun 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"From a 'way of life' to poison on their plates"
Privilege/ Privilege/ Patriarchy	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, government, politicalization, and government intervention	government, hope, agreement, heal, wounds	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	26 Nov 1985	Jim Coyle	"Fighting to clear the poisoned waters"
Privilege/ Privilege/ Patriarchy/ Politicalization	government, politicalization, speaking on behalf of, who benefits, government intervention, tokenism (tokenism as a political act), and romanticization	government, reserve, acts, institutions, live better	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Oct 2018	Editor	"Must build trust"
Privilege/ Privilege/Savage/ Inferior/ Guilt	government, politicalization, speaking on behalf of, who benefits, need to save, backward or ignorant, reactions to guilt, and appeals to guilt	overwhelming, analysis, data, government, eating the fish, way of life, province	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2016	Stephen Bede Scharper and Annamaria Enenajor	"Grassy Narrows contamination on a crime against humanity?"
Privilege/ Savage	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and combative	turmoil. insensitivity, bias, community members feel differently	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 May 2018	Michelle McQuigge	"Decades later, mercury contamination lingers"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/ Savage	government and politicalization, and combative	government, progress, meeting, butting heads	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Feb 2016	Rudy Platiel	"Grassy Narrows hoping to escape its troubled past"
Privilege/ Savage/ Guilt	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, need to save, appeals to guilt, and reactions to guilt	appalling, contamination, government support, compensation, intervention, help	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2017	Denis Harrington	"Peterson honored as natives celebrate end of pollution case"
Privilege/ Savage/ Inferior	government, politicalization, need to save, and backward or ignorant	advisory, eat the fish, painful	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	05 Jun 2012	Anna Mehler Paperny	"Ontario natives bear mercury's toxic legacy"
Privilege/ Savage/ Patriarchy	government, politicalization, need to save, and government intervention	idleness, health, alcohol, welfare, violence, self- destruction	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Dec 1985	Shari Baker, Toronto	"Act now on Grassy Narrows"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	money, remedy, economic harm, contamination, development, sickened, deprived, livelihood	<i>Toronto Star</i>	03 Jul 2017	Betty Walton, Toronto	"Act now on Grassy Narrows"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	government, bill, racism, correction	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Jun 2016	Eric Balkind, Gore Bay, Ont.	"Act now on Grassy Narrows"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	visiting politician, government, unhappy, optimism, goodwill, solve, problems	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Gerard C. Ronan, former assistant deputy minister, Ontario Ministry of the Environmen t	"Visions still haunt him 40 years later"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	government, concerns, money, pre-cleanup, studies, action plan	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Apr 2017	Stephen Bede Scharper, a fellow of Trinity College, teaches environmental studies at the University of Toronto.	"Grassy Narrows mercury disaster a form of environmental racism"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	imperative, arouse ourselves, stop, contamination, action, redemption, correct, wrongs	<i>Toronto Star</i>	16 Jun 2016	Madeleine Nevins, Markham	"Injustice swept under the rug"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	suffering, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	01 Jun 2017	Editor	"Action, at long last"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	government, ethics, action, study, advocacy, remedy, situation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Jun 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Grassy Narrows chief slams Trudeau"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	study, contamination, truth, persistence, journalists, government, action, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	19 Feb 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Provincial budget left out Grassy Narrows, chief says"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	robbed, health, lands, livelihood, industry, clean up, compensation, government, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	24 Nov 2017	Editor	"Stop the excuses"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	contaminated, death, poison, water, eat the fish, food, foreign	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Mar 2019	Lex Mackenzie, Pickering	"Grassy Narrows cleanup commitment is very late"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	government, money, election, cleanup, generosity, action, funds	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Jun 2016	Paul Collier, Toronto	"Grassy Narrows cleanup commitment is very late"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	money, contamination, predicaments, book, story, situation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	03 Jul 2017	Editor	"Breaking the trust"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	contamination, reserve, trust, incompetence, government, dangerous, wilful	<i>Toronto Star</i>	24 Nov 2017	Editor	"Breaking the trust"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	money, diverse, equity, deplorable, uninhabitable, visiting politicians, proper housing, clean water, food, shame, inaction, ignore, plight, solution, lack of progress	<i>Toronto Star</i>	27 Sep 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Province vague on plans for contaminated river's cleanup"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, exploitation, and taking advantage of coverage	writer, right thing is done	<i>Toronto Star</i>	25 Nov 2017	Kingston, Ont.	"Activists snubbed by PM try to steer attention back to Grassy Narrows' woes"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	government, clean hands	<i>Toronto Star</i>	03 Mar 2017	Jim Coyle	"Fighting to clear the poisoned waters"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	suffering, compensation	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	07 Apr 2010	Denis Harrington	"Peterson's now 'Me See Way Kijik'"
Privilege/Guilt	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government and politicalization	sad, government, shame	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Jun 2016	Don Weitz, Toronto	"Poisoning a national shame"
Privilege/Guilt/Savage/Inferior	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government, politicalization, combative, and backward or ignorant	government, promise, relationships, contamination, apologized, demands, difficult	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Feb 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup"
Privilege/Guilt/Savage	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government, politicalization, and combative	research, journalists, exposed, contamination, suffer, died, government, guilt, genocide, reserves, epidemic, addiction, suicide, death, studies, lawsuits, action, crime, shame	<i>Toronto Star</i>	09 Dec 2018	Rob Ferguson	"Native protest tests new ministry; Teepee at Legislature puts focus on logging, mineral exploration"
Privilege/Guilt/Savage	reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, government, politicalization, and combative	patient, hope, not equal, dominant society, forgiveness, unhappy, wrongs, elders, optimism, solve, help	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Rob Ferguson	"Native protest tests new ministry; Teepee at Legislature puts focus on logging, mineral exploration"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Privilege/Privilege	government, politicalization, speaking on behalf of, and who benefits	commitment, government, issue, journalists, persistent, horrified, racism, colonialism	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jun 2017	Editor	"Mercury rising"
Privilege/Savage	government, politicalization, and need to save	degradation, health, social fabric, issue, fix it, crisis	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	08 Dec 2016	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Blood, hair tests show elevated mercury levels"
Privilege/Savage	government, politicalization, and need to save	jobs, business, work, government	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Jun 2007	Michael Moore	"THREE VILLAGES IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE: 3 A community hits rock bottom and scrambles upward"
Privilege/Savage	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and need to save	activist, protest, government, on behalf of, teepee	<i>Toronto Star</i>	26 Jun 2007	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Compensation board for mercury victims in turmoil"
Privilege/Savage	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and need to save	data, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	13 Feb 2018	Susan Reid	"Plans and cash replace despair of Ojibwa bands"
Privilege/Savage/Inferior	speaking on behalf of, who benefits, and need to save, backward or ignorant	metaphysics, aura, breakdown	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	27 Apr 1978	Kate Harries	"Grassy Narrows, still fighting"
Savage/Inferior	combative, and backward or ignorant	tension, police, job, shootings	<i>Toronto Star</i>	29 Jul 1991	N/A	"Forgotten victims"
Savage/Inferior	combative, and backward or ignorant	reserve, respectful, integrity, honesty	<i>Toronto Star</i>	06 May 2018	Hugh McKechnie, Newmarket	"Too late for Grassy Narrows"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage/ Savage	need to save, and combative	warrior society, Oka crisis, violence, media coverage, justice, Christian, peacemakers, blockade, aggressive, mothers, peaceful	<i>Toronto Star</i>	30 Nov 2003	Jim Fegan, Oshawa	"Too late for Grassy Narrows"
Savage/ Savage	need to save. and combative	handouts, needy, social problems	<i>Toronto Star</i>	10 Nov 1986	Claudine Goller, Scarborough	"Mercury contamination is our collective sin"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	grandmother, development, sickening, lowly, government, corporations, alive, poison	<i>Toronto Star</i>	11 Nov 2017	Randy Gostlin, Oshawa	"Mercury contamination is our collective sin"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	rejoiced, enduring, death, shame, white	<i>Toronto Star</i>	15 Feb 2017	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"Ontario knew about Grassy Narrows mercury for decades, but kept it secret"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	problem, corrected, journalists, activists	<i>Toronto Star</i>	20 Jan 2017	David Bruser	"Toxic fallout affects Grassy Narrows children"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	government, do something, clean up, persistent journalists	<i>Toronto Star</i>	15 Feb 2017	Daniela Germano	"Health in Grassy Narrows 'significantly worse' than other First Nations: report"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	guilt, money, truth, traditions, death	<i>Toronto Star</i>	20 Jan 2017	Denis Harrington	"Peterson honored as natives celebrate end of pollution case"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	alcohol, idleness, violence, poverty, destroy, social, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	24 Sep 1983	Denis Harrington	"Peterson's now 'Me See Way Kijik'"
Savage/Guilt	need to save, reactions to guilt and appeals to guilt	research, children, challenges	<i>Toronto Star</i>	05 Dec 2018	Richard J. Brennan	"Nightmare of mercury contamination returns; Study says reserve's diet of polluted fish worse than it was 40 years ago"
Savage/Guilt/Inferior	need to save, reactions to guilt, appeals to guilt, backward or ignorant, and helplessness	suffered, health, self-esteem, job, despair, alcohol	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	25 May 2018	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"A poisoned people"
Savage/Inferior	combative, backward or ignorant	way of life, religion, land, foreign	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser	"From a 'way of life' to poison on their plates"
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant	water treatment, money, boil water	<i>Toronto Star</i>	22 May 2018	Jayne Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup"
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant	eat the fish, money, food, live of the land, culture	<i>Toronto Star</i>	23 Nov 2016	Rob Ferguson	"NDP pledges more help for Grassy Narrows"

Register	Discourses	Keywords	Publication	Date	Author	Title
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant	mother, suffering, contamination, problems, eat the fish, compensation	<i>Toronto Star</i>	06 Apr 2010	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"Mercury's heavy toll on Grassy Narrows"
Savage/Inferior	combative, backward or ignorant	dominant society, white, exploit, deny, reserve	<i>Toronto Star</i>	12 Sep 1986	Duncan McMonagle	"Peterson hears litany of woe from Grassy Narrows band"
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant, and helplessness	issues, poverty, health, food, contamination	<i>Toronto Star</i>	24 May 2018	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"Mercury's heavy toll on Grassy Narrows"
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant	lifeblood, suffer, tragedy, justice	<i>Toronto Star</i>	28 Jun 2017	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser, Robert Benzie	"Grassy Narrows to get \$85M cleanup"
Savage/Inferior	need to save, backward or ignorant	eat the fish, belief	<i>Toronto Star</i>	25 Jul 2016	Jayme Poisson, David Bruser	"A poisoned people"
Savage/Inferior /Savage	need to save, backward or ignorant, and combative	troubled, condemned, race, harm, white, reserve	<i>Globe and Mail</i>	12 Sep 1986	Duncan McMonagle	"Peterson hears litany of woe from Grassy Narrows band"